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BISHOP BLOMFIELD

AND

HIS TIMES.

An Historical Sketch

BY THE

REV. GEORGE EDWARD BIBER, LL.D.,

PERPETUAL CURATE OF ROEHAMPTON.

"Nec vos moveat, fratres dilectissimi, si apud quosdam in novissimis temporibus aut lubrica fides nutat, aut Dei timor apud irreligiosos vacillat, aut pacifica concordia non perseverat. Prænuntiata sunt hæc futura in sæculi fine; et Domini voce, atque Apostolorum contestatione prædictum est, deficiente jam mundo, atque appropinquante Antichristo bona quæque deficere, mala vero et adversa proficere. Non sic tamen, quamvis novissimis temporibus, in Ecclesia Dei aut Evangelicus vigor cecidit, aut Christianæ virtutis aut fidei robur elanguit, ut non supersit portio Sacerdotum, quæ minime ad hæc rerum ruinas, et fidei naufragia succumbat; sed fortis et stabilis honorem Divine Majestatis, et Sacerdotalem dignitatem plena timoris observatione tueatur."—*S. Cypr., Ep., lxxvii.*

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PREFACE.

THE idea of the following history did not originate with the writer himself. When it was first suggested to his mind by a literary friend, he felt at once all the delicacy of such a task—that of reviewing the career of a man still among the living, though *functus officio*. That man being, moreover, one to whom he had for years been privileged to look up as to his Ecclesiastical superior, he must have shrunk altogether from undertaking it, had it not been for a well-grounded confidence, which in the progress of his labours has not been disappointed, that the truth of history would not require him to pen one word inconsistent with the affectionate regard he cherished, and shall never cease to cherish, for his late Diocesan.

This he thinks it right to state in explanation, not only of the fact of his having taken in hand a theme of so much delicacy, but of the tone and spirit in which he has treated it. Bishop Blomfield was,

doubtless, no exception from the common rule, "*Errare humanum est*;" nor has the author felt himself called upon to suppress or to palliate those passages in his career which may be open to just criticism: but neither has he felt it to be his duty,—even if it could have become him to have done so,—to give to those features of his subject that kind of prominence which it is at once the fashion and the pride of the critical literature of the day to give to the failings and imperfections of the great and the good. He looks upon the spirit of detraction which pervades the productions of modern writers on public affairs and public men,—the tendency and the effect of which is to breed in the popular mind a vulgar and ignorant contempt of all who are placed in stations of superior power and usefulness,—as upon one of the chief sins of the age: and not only of its chief sins, but of its chief curses;—for by a righteous retribution the effect of this indulgence of a spirit of injustice and ingratitude on the part of the public, is to scare away true genius and sterling worth more and more from the conduct of public affairs, and to cause the management of them to fall into the hands of stolid, selfish mediocrity, or of clever, scheming impudence.

That a spirit which even in regard to secular affairs is so reprehensible in its character, and so baneful in its effects, should, when displayed in matters affecting the Church, be tenfold more hateful and more pernicious, is a conclusion not to be

resisted: but it is unfortunately one which does not always suggest itself to the minds of those who take a prominent part in the discussion of religious questions and of ecclesiastical affairs. Were it otherwise, we should, assuredly, see less in the Church of the spirit of strife and contention, more of the spirit of love and godly concord. If we were more intent to mark in one another what is excellent and worthy of imitation,—to our neighbours' faults more blind, and more quick-sighted in noting our own,—there would be less party hostility; differences which are now swelled into distressing magnitude would sink into insignificance; and our oneness with one another in Christ Jesus, that secret fountain of the Church's life and strength, would be more fully and more blessedly realized.

How far the author has succeeded in casting the narrative of the eventful period of our Church's history, during which Bishop Blomfield stands in the foreground of the picture, in the mould of these convictions, he must leave the judgment of his readers to determine. It has been his aim throughout, as regards Bishop Blomfield himself, to let his words and actions tell their own tale; and, in general, to let facts speak for themselves. Not attached, himself, to any party in the Church,—having ever studiously kept himself from every religious tie and sympathy, except the tie which binds him to, the sympathy which links him with, the Church, the

visible representation on earth of the communion of Saints, in the still militant portion of Christ's Body, —he has had no temptation either to exaggerate or to extenuate, because they were committed by one party rather than another, any of those offences against the Church which it has been his painful duty to chronicle; no temptation, on the other hand, either to overrate or to depreciate any of the good things which have contributed to the furtherance of the Church's work and weal, because the merit of them belonged to one or other party.

In recounting facts which the Church-historian would be far better pleased if he had not to put on record, he has endeavoured, as much as possible, to avoid reference to individuals; and he has mentioned names, especially of persons still living, only where to avoid them was impossible, or would have savoured of affectation. And whilst he is well aware that the truth cannot be faithfully set down without occasionally giving offence by the very fact that it is truth, he trusts that he has made no statement calculated to cause pain, through misrepresentation, however unintentional.

It may be right further to state, that the following pages have been composed free from all influence or bias, direct or indirect, on the part of Bishop Blomfield himself, or of any of his near friends and relatives. With the exception of an occasional reference as to particular documents or dates, no communica-

tion has taken place between them and himself. For the courtesy and kindness, however, which he has experienced in the course of such communications as were consistent with the perfect independence of the author's mind, he gladly takes this opportunity of expressing his grateful acknowledgments to the Bishop's son, the Rev. Frederick G. Blomfield, Rector of St. Andrew's, Undershaft; to the Venerable John Sinclair, Archdeacon of Middlesex; and to the Rev. Robert G. Baker, Vicar of Fulham.

That the hope of rendering some service, however humble, to the Church, by a careful and impartial digest of the leading events of Bishop Blomfield's Episcopate, was his chief inducement in undertaking so laborious a task, the writer is free to confess. It did appear to him that as the appointment of the Bishop to the high and influential station which he so long and so honourably filled, coincided with a great crisis in the history of the Church, so the termination of his official career significantly happened at a juncture equally critical. If he mistakes not, the history of "Bishop Blomfield and his Times" is in fact the history of an important transition period. The English Church as she had moulded herself after the Revolution of 1688, vegetated through the two first reigns of the Hanoverian succession, and finally consolidated herself into a condition of dry, insular respectability, in the reign of George III., was evidently not fitted to cope with the emergencies,

and to satisfy the exigencies, of an age of unprecedented mental energy, and of facility and rapidity of intercourse equally unprecedented between all the families of mankind. A development of the human mind as gigantic in its character, and as free in its movements, as that of which the seeds have been sown during the lifetime of the generation now about to descend into the tomb, requires, if it is to be spiritually controlled, a commensurate exhibition of power and of freedom in the Church. But to that state of power and freedom the Church could not rise all at once. The Church that shall display in fulness and vigour such power and freedom of spiritual life, the Church of the future—in a very different sense from that in which this expressive term is used, or rather abused, by the author of “Hippolytus and his Age,”—is a Church differing in all her proportions, and in her whole aspect, as widely as the essential identity of the Church of all ages will admit, from the Church of whose ideas and feelings the Episcopal wig was a fitting type.

Between this Church and that it needed a transition Church, and of this transition Church Bishop Blomfield—not insignificantly, as was noted at the time, the first Bishop that discarded the unecclesiastic substitute for the mitre,—was the main-spring and the representative. To stimulate and to guide the Church’s energies during the development of this transition stage of her existence, appears to have been his special mission. The chrysalis in its

first formation retains the lineaments of the larva from whose existence to that of the perfect insect it forms the transition: but as the time for the latter to burst into life approaches, the gradual development of its form becomes visible through the attenuated coating in which it is encased. In like manner, while the "high and dry" character of the Establishment, strong in the patronage of Toryism, disappeared but slowly and insensibly at the earlier period of the transition state of the Church which is coincident with Bishop Blomfield's Episcopate, its close is marked by unmistakable indications premonitory of some great change, by which the Church is to emerge into an entirely new condition.

On the character of that change the hearts and minds of all to whom the Primitive and Catholic Deposit of the Faith, and the Apostolic foundations of the Church, are dear and sacred, are fixed with intense desire, not unmingled with anxiety. That it will not be ushered in without a mighty struggle, mightier than any the Church has as yet passed through, we may be very sure. On the one hand, the Papacy, with unexampled daring, has revived her most extravagant pretensions to universal supremacy, whilst at the same time she bids defiance alike to Catholic Truth, and to the common sense of mankind: to the latter by lying miracles, surpassing in profane absurdity the "pious frauds" and legends of the darkest ages, to the former by the authoritative promulgation of a new dogma, which strikes at the very root of the

Christian faith by attributing to the Virgin Mary, in the place of Christ, the initiative of a new, purified and sanctified humanity, and the power of all-availing mediation between God and man. On the other hand the Spirit of Unbelief, with daring no less unparalleled, assails both the Church, God's Ordinance, and the Bible, God's Word; denying the supernatural origin, and repudiating the Divine authority, of both; and claiming for the mind of man the supreme right and power of decision on questions of truth, and of regulation on matters of religious observance, as well as of general determination of both the purpose of human existence, and the best means of attaining it;—on the principle, openly avowed, and broadly asserted, that religion is a matter in regard to which each individual is entitled to be his own lawgiver and instructor, and, as far as any public recognition and observance is concerned, a matter to be regulated in accordance with the will of the majority.

Whether in the conflict which thus awaits her, against the spiritual tyranny of the Popedom, and the spiritual rebellion of Unbelief, the Church be destined to prove victorious, or to suffer a temporary defeat, as the prelude to the final victory of the Second Advent of her Blessed Lord in the glory and power of His eternal kingdom, is a question which the event alone can decide. The prospect of this alternative, however, does not affect the principle by which the Church ought to be guided in entering

upon the conflict. That principle is the essential unity and identity of God's Truth and Ordinance, under every change of times and circumstances, and every variation of outward form and arrangement which the necessity of adaptation to times and circumstances may require. By that principle Bishop Blomfield held fast with a tenacity worthy of a successor of the Apostles; and it is by the example which he set of unbending adherence to Catholic Truth and Apostolic Order amidst concession and defeat, as well as by the prophetic warnings against impending conflicts and dangers to which he gave utterance, that the history of his Episcopate is rendered so deeply instructive to every thoughtful and observant member of the Church.

Certain it is, moreover, that if, according to God's predestinated counsel, the time of the end is "not yet,"—if before the advent of that great, that terrible and glorious day, the day of the end, another and a new era is opening to the Church, in which she is to put forth the powers of truth and holiness of which she is the Divinely appointed depositary and channel, for the healing of the nations, for the salvation of souls, and for the glory of Christ,—she can fulfil that high mission only by the display of her spiritual supremacy, curbing and controlling, by a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, the proudest assertions, and the boldest flights, of human intellect. That the tendency of the transition period, at the close of which we appear to have arrived, and in it

specifically the tendency of Bishop Blomfield's influence, was to raise the Clergy to the mental stature requisite for such an encounter with the giant growth of man's intellect, and to train them to the use of that spiritual armour which alone can avail to the "pulling down of strong holds," to the "casting down of imaginations, and of every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God," is another fact which invests the history of that period with uncommon interest.

Forasmuch, then, as God, in the spiritual as in the natural world, works through a gradation of consecutive operations, every successive growth and display of life in the progress of His purpose being the fruit of an antecedent development of the same life, it did appear to the author of these pages that a retrospect of the Church's history during the Episcopate of Bishop Blomfield,—forming an important link between the past and the future of the Church,—might be of no small service. Having undertaken it under the influence of these views and convictions, he now sends forth the result of his labours, albeit not insensible of the contrast between the loftiness of his theme and the humble character of his performance, yet with the earnest hope and fervent prayer, that it may not prove altogether useless to those who have a mind to "discern this time."

Reckampton, June 1857.

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ERRATA.

Page 77, line 10; for "efforts" read "effects."

Page 164, line 9 from below; for "Hanowby" read "Harrowby."



Bishop Blomfield and His Times.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction—Retrospect of the condition of the Church towards the close of Archbishop Sutton's Primacy—Relaxation of Discipline—Neglect of Church Societies—Disuse of the Buri-decanal Office—Non-residence—Pluralities—Pluralist Curates—Simoniacal Titles—Low Standard of Theological Attainments—Letters Dimissory—Irregularities of Bishop Bathurst—Inadequate discharge of Ministerial Functions—Occasional Offices—Parochial Duties—Public Services—Uncanonical Services—Religious Partisanship—Doctrinal Unsoundness—Corrupt Distribution of Church Patronage—Earl Grey and Bishop Bathurst—Shameless Avowals of Archdeacon Bathurst—Literary Relics of Archbishop Sutton—Dangers Impending over the Church—Infidelity—Hostility of Dissenters—Revival of Popish Pretensions—Rising Spirit of Innovation—Disuse of Synodal Action—Prognostications of Bishop Howley and Bishop Bethell—Death of Archbishop Sutton.



MAN of mark has vanished from the scene. Prostration of physical strength, induced by excess of mental activity, has deprived our Church of one of her most gifted and most efficient rulers, at a moment when, more than ever, she stands in need of all the energy and zeal, all the ability and wisdom, that can be enlisted in her service. Were the Church a human institution, we might, without exaggeration of language, dwell on the irreparable loss which she has sustained: but since she is a Divine institution, it behoves us to remember

that her office-bearers, the highest and the humblest alike, are no more than instruments in the hands of her Great Head in heaven, Who raises them up and lays them aside as He sees to be most conducive to her welfare,—by Whom, whatsoever events befall her, are well and wisely ordered. And because such is our faith, because we believe, as we are taught, that in the varying fortunes of His Church, the finger of Him Who ordereth all things after the counsel of His own will, is, even more expressly, nay, visibly marked than in the vicissitudes of the world which that Church is to leaven, and in which not a sparrow falls to the ground without His sovereign will and all-directing Providence,—it would assuredly be unmeet that an event like the one alluded to should be allowed to pass by unheeded, like those common occurrences of life, the ephemeral record of which, after furnishing matter for the talk of the passing hour, sinks into oblivion, until, the sap of living sympathies having had time to evaporate, the dried fragments are gathered up by the biographer or the historian.

However different may be the judgments passed on Bishop Blomfield's occupancy of the metropolitan see during the last eight-and-twenty years, all are agreed that his influence has made itself felt, not only within the limits of his diocese, but far beyond it; over the whole Church of England, and over her sister and daughter churches throughout the world. How vast has been the reach, how powerful the effect, of that influence, those only can fully estimate who have had opportunities of closer observation,—who are aware how much weight was attached to Bishop Blomfield's advice by those with whom he was in the habit of acting, more especially by the late Primate,—who know, too, in how large a measure the leading statesmen, even those who considered him more or less in the light of an opponent, deferred, or at any rate shaped their course in reference, to the opinions

which he expressed or was known to entertain. That the history of the Church for the last quarter of a century bears the impress of his character, will scarcely be denied. To what extent that character was originally his own, imposed, by that power which is inherent in master-minds, upon the age in which he lived ; and to what extent it was moulded by the character of the age, which thus, through him, reflected its own character upon itself, is a question to which the progress of the history upon which we are about to enter, will supply the answer. In any event, the retrospect of his Episcopate, and of that portion of the Church's history which it occupies, cannot fail to be deeply instructive,—suggestive of important considerations for the guidance of churchmen in that new era the commencement of which, significantly enough, coincides with his withdrawal from the scene of action.

In order to form a right estimate of the changes which the aspect of the Church and her position have undergone during the period in question, it is necessary that we should have a correct idea of the state of things which obtained at its commencement, when the generation which is now rapidly declining was starting into life. For this purpose the episcopal charges of that day obviously furnish the most reliable information ; and it is upon their high authority that the following sketch of the state of Church affairs towards the close of Archbishop Sutton's Primacy is founded.

What at once strikes the reader of the present day, on the perusal of most of those documents, is the low state of spiritual attainment, and the low view of their sacred calling, which they presuppose in those to whom they were addressed. A tone of elementary teaching pervades them which involuntarily betrays the very moderate estimate formed of their hearers by those who penned them,

and which no Bishop would think of adopting in the present day. The explanations given touching the Church, her origin, her character, and her constitution, are invariably such as would, in these days, be almost misplaced when addressed to candidates for ordination; and points of church discipline and of clerical duty are urged, which are now taken for granted as matters of course.

One Bishop, after endeavouring to kindle the enthusiasm of his clergy for the Church of which they are ministers, by an elaborate argument to prove that the *via media* is her way in all things, deems it necessary to remind them, at the close, that to the question of faithfulness or unfaithfulness in the discharge of their duties the *via media* principle does not apply. Another Bishop, entering upon the government of his diocese with an eager desire that it should prove fruitful of good, laments the "relaxation of discipline" which had caused episcopal visitations to become a mere matter of form, from which no practical results flowed, or were expected to flow. The great Church societies are recommended to the attention and the support of the clergy in terms which seem to indicate that they were not only regarded with lamentable indifference, but that the nature of their operations, and their very objects, were but imperfectly understood. The ruri-decanal office had very generally fallen into disuse, and meetings of the clergy, for purposes of conference and mutual edification, if mentioned at all, are spoken of as novel arrangements, which some of the Bishops were willing to encourage. To united action the clergy appear to have been altogether strangers; each man, within the limits of his cure, and sometimes beyond them, doing as was right in his own eyes.

Non-residence prevailed to an extent which, in our days, seems almost incredible. In most of the charges of the period it forms a prominent topic. It was not confined to incumbents, but extended even to stipendiary

curates, who, as well as their employers, absented themselves from their parishes as often and as long as they thought fit. In one diocese, containing upwards of 200 benefices, there were more than 100 in which neither incumbent nor curate was resident. In some cases licenses were obtained by the non-residents, the plea being that the glebe-house was not fit for occupation; and, as is observed in one of the charges, the license being once granted, no steps were taken to put the glebe-house into tenantable repair; on the contrary, it was left to fall into dilapidation, or was let, occasionally for purposes singularly incongruous with its original destination. Many of the clergy, however, were non-resident without the Bishop's leave or knowledge, and great difficulty was experienced by the Diocesans in procuring information on the subject.

Closely connected with the evil of non-residence was that of plurality, facilitated by the numerous grounds on which the law permitted the holding of several benefices by one and the same incumbent. The least objectionable case was that,—which under certain restrictions is still permitted,—of one clergyman holding two poor benefices within a practicable distance of each other, and serving them both by giving one service, on the morning and afternoon alternately, to each. Sometimes the same incumbent would hold and serve as many as three benefices, travelling from one to the other on the Sunday, and performing on each a hurried service. Or, if the distance between them was too great to admit of the circuit being made, or if the incumbent was not of a sufficiently active turn of mind to dispose him to do so, he served them in turns, giving to each of his parishes the benefit of his presence once a fortnight, or once in every three weeks. Nor was the evil of plurality confined to benefices. Beneficed clergymen undertook, in addition to their livings, the charge of stipendiary curacies; and if the latter were

more lucrative, or otherwise more attractive, resided on them in preference to their benefices. Nay, even stipendiary curates would serve two or more curacies in contiguous parishes, dividing their services between them. So prevalent had these practices become, and so great were the inconveniences resulting from them, that one Bishop—Bishop Jenkinson of Llandaff, in his primary charge, delivered in 1828,—thought it necessary to give formal notice that in no case would he allow one clergyman to serve more than two churches on the same day. What rendered it extremely difficult for the Bishops to put a stop to these abuses, was the very general practice of curates entering upon, changing, and relinquishing their cures without any notice to the Bishop,—a practice on which Bishop Jenkinson thus comments:—"Cures will often be served by persons of whose opinions, character, and qualifications the Bishop has no opportunity of being satisfied; the provisions of the late Clergy Act, relative to the salary of stipendiary curates, their place of residence, its distance from the church, and other important particulars to be stated in the nomination, will be rendered nugatory; and an opening will thus be made for the introduction of unworthy persons into the diocese, nay, even of persons not in Holy Orders." The fact appears to be that the curate was regarded, not as the servant of the Church, but as the servant of the incumbent, who considered himself at liberty to employ whom he pleased, on what terms he pleased, and to change his curate whenever he pleased; while the curate, taking the same view of his position, threw up his "situation," whenever he thought he could "better himself," with little ceremony, and upon the shortest notice, or without any notice at all.

This vicious system in the employment of stipendiary curates derived no small support from the still more reprehensible practices which obtained in regard to Holy

Orders. Candidates who were ill-qualified in point either of character or of attainments, had little difficulty in procuring ordination by means of what were called "friendly," but were, in reality, fraudulent titles: that is to say, ostensible nominations to curacies which they were never *bond fide* intended to serve, or which they undertook, for the sake of the title, to serve for a time without stipend, or for an exceedingly low sum; a private arrangement to that effect being entered into between the incumbent giving the title and the candidate for Orders, who thus conspired to impose upon the Bishop, in the official instrument of nomination, by statements wholly at variance with the facts and with their own intentions. "The truth is," says Bishop Jenkinson, in speaking of these titles, "no person will now take a curacy with so small a stipend as forty pounds a-year, unless he wants a title; for the sake of obtaining which experience has taught me that candidates will submit to anything. And then, eager as they are to embrace any offer that affords an opportunity for their admission into [the ministry of] the Church; yet when once this object is fully attained, although no dissatisfaction was expressed at the amount of the stipend, when they were candidates for ordination, they apply to me to be allowed to leave their curacies, and the reason invariably assigned is, that forty pounds a-year is inadequate to their maintenance."

These titles,—which, more justly than any other transaction, short of giving and receiving a direct bribe for conferring Orders, deserve to be branded by the designation "simoniacal," applied to them by Bishop Van Mildert; seeing that they were corrupt bargains, entered into for the purpose of obtaining, not, as in the case of the purchase of livings, the opportunity of exercising ministerial gifts, but ordination itself,—were supported by testimonials too often, as appears from the complaints of the Bishops, signed without a due regard to the solemn

responsibility involved in the introduction of an unfit or unworthy person into the ministry of the Church. As regards the amount of theological learning that might serve a man in those days to enter the ministry, a curious illustration of it is afforded by the following instructions given by Bishop Bathurst of Norwich to his son, Arch-deacon Bathurst, who, in the spring of 1830, acted provisionally as his examining chaplain :—"With respect to the *books* usually employed on the occasion in question, they are very few,—‘Grotius de Veritate, &c. ;’ the ‘Greek Testament ;’ and I frequently desired young men to read over *two or three pages* of the ‘Tractatus de Visitatione Infirmorum,’ bound up in the ‘Clergyman’s Instructor.’ By the way, this Visitation of the Sick is a very important, but I fear much neglected duty. In addition to what I have stated, some leading questions respecting *subscription* to the Articles, and to the DOCTRINES* contained in them, you will, of course, think necessary; but to your own judgment this point may be safely left. I have only to mention that *Two Compositions*, one in *Latin*, the other in *English*, are expected from every one who presents himself to you for ordination; the subjects are such, for instance, as Infant Baptism; the necessity of learning in a clergyman,” &c., &c.

This, considering Bishop Bathurst’s reputation for facility in the matter of ordination, may, probably, be taken as the *minimum* of requirement at an examination for Orders; but there is no reason to suppose that the *maximum* went much beyond it; and even the low test of Norwich was frequently and easily evaded. To avoid the inconvenience and risk of the regular examination for Orders, ill-qualified candidates, provided with fictitious titles and mendacious testimonials, resorted to the expedient of applying for Orders during the intervals of the periodical ordinations in the dioceses in which they were

* These italics and capitals are the Bishop’s own.

to be employed, and procuring letters dimissory to some other Bishop. As late as the year 1826, the late Archbishop Howley, in the last charge delivered by him as Bishop of London, complained of this abuse, and intimated his determination to check it by discouraging to the utmost of his power the practice of ordination upon letters dimissory. Yet great as was the laxity, and more than laxity, of incumbents in the granting of titles, and the signing of testimonials for Orders, their irregularities were surpassed by at least one member of the Episcopal Bench, Bishop Bathurst, who did not scruple to ordain upon titles in the dioceses of other Bishops, and who, when remonstrated with (as he was by Bishop Pretymann of Winchester,) or called to account by his Ecclesiastical Superior, the Archbishop of Canterbury, (as he was on a subsequent occasion, at the instance of Bishop Blomfield while occupying the See of Chester,)—thought himself entitled to complain of the over-strained strictness of his brother prelates.

That under the operation of all these causes, opening the door for the admission of improper and unfit men into the ministry, and in the absence of an efficient superintendence and control over them on the part of the Bishops, much grievous neglect, and many and various irregularities in the discharge of ministerial functions should have ensued, is not surprising. Accordingly the episcopal charges of the period teem with complaints, remonstrances, and exhortations on the total omission of some, and the unsatisfactory performance of others, of the duties devolving on the parochial clergy.

The initiatory sacrament of the Christian covenant was put completely into the shade. It was administered frequently in private houses, and even in the sacred edifice commonly in a private manner, after the conclusion of the public service, in the absence of the congregation, and in the presence of sponsors incapable not only of discharging,

but of comprehending, the responsibility of the office which they undertook, generally in dumb show; while the slovenly manner in which the service was too often performed by the clergyman, hurrying over and occasionally altering,—with a view to adapt them to his own notions,—the words of the office, followed in many cases by the exaction of a fee, tended yet further to denude the ordinance of its solemnity. While children were thus inauspiciously received into the congregation of Christ's flock, little or no provision was made for training them up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The aid proffered by the National Society for the establishment of parochial schools was but partially appreciated; the same lukewarmness which kept the funds of the Society miserably low, caused the facilities which it presented for the furtherance of that most important branch of the parochial work to be disregarded. Public catechizing in the Church had fallen almost universally into disuse; and even in parishes where the claims of the lambs of the flock on pastoral care were not wholly overlooked, the far less efficient plan of Sunday schools was substituted in its place.

The preparation for the ordinance of Confirmation was meagre in proportion to the ignorance of the candidates and their consequent need of instruction; and while the Confirmations, being held less frequently, were the occasion of a much larger and much more disorderly concourse than under the present greatly improved but far from satisfactory system, few of the clergy considered it any part of their duty to accompany their candidates to or from the place of Confirmation, and, while uniting their prayers with those of the Bishop for a blessing on the heads of their youthful charges, to guard them from temptations to levity and profaneness on the most solemn day of their lives. Participation in the Holy Communion, as the first act of Christian privilege following upon Confirmation, was the rare exception and not the rule.

In the administration of the last-named sacrament, no less than in the other offices of the Church, coldness, neglect and irregularity, largely prevailed. Participation of it, while made by act of Parliament a test of qualification for civil office, had in the practice of the Church long ceased to be a test of church-membership. In the great majority of parishes the celebration of the Holy Communion was painfully unfrequent, often confined to the three festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide. Its celebration once at least in every month was a considerable step in advance, urged in the charges of such of the Bishops as were most deeply anxious for the spiritual improvement of their dioceses. The solemn and decent order of the Church in the ministration of the elements was constantly infringed by wholesale administration to "rails" of communicants. The offertory collection preceding the Holy Communion was in some places altogether omitted; while in other places the distribution of the alms collected, then and there, among the poor who attended the Lord's Table, was the occasion of desecration fearful to contemplate to many of this class of communicants, and of serious and not ill-founded offence, as well as of plausible excuse, to many non-communicants. The natural result of all this was, that a large majority of the congregation never communicated at all. While one of the Prelates now on the Bench, in a charge to his clergy, deduced from the data of the last census as regards the ages of the population,* the inference that more than one-half of the population of their parishes, or, at all events, of the professed members of the Church under their

* According to the census of 1821, out of every 100 people there were, under seven years of age, 20; between seven and fifteen, 20; between fifteen and twenty, 10; and above twenty, 50; whence the present Archbishop of Canterbury, then Bishop of Chester, told his clergy, they might calculate the number of communicants they ought to have.

charge, ought to be communicants,—another Prelate still living, the Bishop of Winchester, then Bishop of Llandaff, collected from the returns of the clergy themselves that, out of a population of 150,000, not more than 19,169 were attendants upon the services of the Church, and only 4,134 communicants, being about 5 per cent. of the adult population.

While the more public offices of the Church were thus by the people, and often by the clergy themselves, treated with indifference and neglect, it is not to be expected that the more private ministrations would be carefully attended to; and we are not surprised, therefore, to meet with frequent complaints of inattention to the duty of visiting the sick, and of a degree of slovenliness in the performance of the marriage and burial services, not likely either to impart solemnity to the former occasion, or to render the latter fruitful of those salutary impressions which it is eminently calculated to produce even in the most thoughtless.

As regards the ordinary public services of the Church, we find, on this head also, frequent complaints in the episcopal charges of the period. To the scantiness of the opportunities of public worship, arising from non-residence and plurality, we have already adverted; but even where these causes did not operate, the custom of opening the Church for one service only on the Lord's day, had grown exceedingly common. It is made the subject of repeated remonstrance by the Bishops, and proved one of the principal causes of resort to the meeting-house; and that not in remote country districts only, or in such dioceses as Llandaff, where, out of 306 parishes, 26 only had two services on the Sunday,—but in the metropolitan diocese, where Bishop Howley, in his last charge to its clergy, had occasion to raise his voice in protest against the omission of the second service on the Lord's day, as well as against the careless and undevotional tone and spirit in which the Common Prayer was too frequently read. In

other charges we meet with remonstrances against the omission of whole portions of the ritual, as for example, the Litany, or the Communion office, when it suited the clergyman's convenience to abridge the service; as well as against divers unlawful deviations from the order of the prayer-book, some of which, appealed to now-a-days as old established customs, were then rebuked as innovations and affectations of singularity.

Among the more palpable irregularities complained of by the Bishops are—the establishment of public services in schoolrooms and other localities in preference to the parish church, in which the Church service was altogether laid aside; the interpolation into the Church service, by many of the clergy, especially before the sermon, of prayers of their own composition; and the introduction of unauthorized metrical collections, as well as of itinerant singers. In fact, while some of the clergy by their inefficiency and indifference drove their people to the meeting-house, others, animated by an ignorant and misdirected zeal, did all in their power to turn the Church herself into a conventicle. The evils naturally resulting from such a state of things were, moreover, aggravated by the not unfrequent advocacy of objects of a partisan character by the more active among the clergy, and by their interference with the parishes of their neighbours, whose lack of service they affected to supply.

The last mentioned circumstance, and some of the objectionable proceedings before adverted to, had a much deeper root than a mere disregard or dislike of the principle of conformity. Unhappily, after the deadly torpor which had come over the Church of England during the latter half of the last century, the impulse to renewed life was given by a party whose sympathies and doctrinal views had little or nothing of a Church character about them. The numbers of this party, inconsiderable at first, and still further reduced by secessions, gradually increased

in course of time; and thus it came to pass that the revival of religious zeal and activity in the Church was accompanied not only by sundry characteristic violations of Church order, but by a style of preaching at variance with the Church's authoritative doctrine. The Calvinistic school of divinity, which had found so much favour with the Puritans at the time of the Reformation, and which at a later period had for a season altogether overthrown the Church, once more obtained a footing in her pulpits, and caused much trouble and uneasiness to her Bishops, who in their charges made repeated reference to the spread of unsound doctrines among the clergy. The glaring inconsistency of one and the same man teaching two opposite systems of doctrine, one in the desk, at the font, and at the communion table, the other in the pulpit, was forcibly pointed out by the present Bishop of Bangor in the charge delivered at his primary visitation of the diocese of Gloucester in 1825; and the same Prelate three years later felt himself called upon to assert the Church's doctrine on the sacrament of Baptism, which even thus early was made the point of attack by the Calvinistic party, against its depravers. "Our baptismal services," the Bishop observed, "which you must receive in their simple and genuine meaning, without attempting to explain them away, or to accommodate them to opinions or ways of speaking unknown to our Church and to primitive Christianity, contain the germ of all that you can teach on these momentous subjects." And in a charge delivered to the clergy of the diocese of Salisbury in 1826, Bishop Burgess, after an able refutation of the leading errors of Popery, Unitarianism, and Antinomianism, proceeds to advert to "the difficulties in which the important subject of regeneration was involved by its opposite disputants; one party being charged with making Baptism alone sufficient for our salvation, the other with reducing it to a formal and almost unnecessary rite. Of the two ex-

tremes," the Bishop goes on to say, "the latter is much the more common. By some a question has been raised whether regeneration be inseparable from Baptism, which could never be made a question, if the subject be determined by *His* words Who first proposed it. Regeneration, or the new birth, as explained by our Saviour, is being born of water and the Spirit, not of the Spirit only, but of water and the Spirit, which takes place *only* and *always* at Baptism."

These references to the doctrinal disputes which then already began to disturb the Church are not without interest, as tending to show who were the original aggressors in the feud which has since risen to such a fearful height of animosity, and to relieve the sound doctrine of the Church from the *odium*, industriously attached to it by designing controversialists, of being an innovation upon her ancient teaching, originating with a Romanising party.

Neglect, ignorance, irregularity, and unsoundness, were not, however, the only evils by which, at this time, the Church of England was afflicted. The monster abuse, that which accounts for the toleration extended to all the rest, was the shameless exercise of Church patronage by its official dispensers, whether on the Bench or in the Cabinet. Much as there is still to be complained of on this score, matters were infinitely worse, when the first minister of the Crown could venture to make an offer of the archiepiscopal see of Dublin to an English Bishop four years after it had been stated in the public journals on that Bishop's authority, "that his only resource on a winter's evening was a game at cards, and that he would frankly own it was his intention not to give them up," and could accompany that offer, made notoriously on grounds of purely political partizanship, with the no less hypocritical than fulsome assurance that he was induced to make it by "his sense of the great public profit which would be derived from the appointment to that see of a

Prelate distinguished for so many virtues, and such high personal qualifications."* The Bishop to whom that offer was made, had the good sense to decline an appointment which, as he was well aware, must have drawn down upon him a tempest of indignation, and which would have placed him, moreover, in a position not very accordant with his love of ease and personal comfort. But although he did not relish the reward proffered him, mainly for his subserviency to the Whigs on the question of Roman Catholic "Emancipation," as it was called, and for enabling them to quote the authority of a Bishop in favour of a measure subversive of the interests of the Established Church, Bishop Bathurst was as deeply sensible as was Earl Grey of the "claim" which he had upon the Government; and he pressed it on behalf of his family with an urgency which, though it did not satisfy the greedy pretensions of his son, Archdeacon Bathurst, was yet sufficient to disgust even his Whig-radical patrons. It is not often that the public are admitted behind the scenes in matters of this description; and we feel under some obligation, therefore, to the splenetic feelings of disappointment which prompted the late Archdeacon of Norwich to make the frank disclosures contained in his memoirs of his father, Bishop Bathurst, and still more in that singularly tasteful publication entitled "An Easter Offering for the Whigs from Archdeacon Bathurst."

Speaking of the annoyances by which at a particular moment Bishop Bathurst's mind was "harassed,"—one of which, by the way, was the elevation of Bishop Blomfield to the see of London,—the Archdeacon mentions "the great desire of some preferment, with a comfortable

* Earl Grey's letter to Bishop Bathurst, of August 21, 1831.—"To the people of Ireland," the letter adds, "the known principles and uniform conduct of your Lordship could not fail to recommend your appointment as *the best which could be proposed.*"—Memoirs of Bishop Bathurst, vol. i. p. 343.

residence, for his son Robert, who, altogether, with a wife and eight children, had not above (!) 500*l.* a-year clear in the Church; which, with his (Robert's) *liberal notions and aspiring mind*, and that just sense of those claims which his talents, birth, and indefatigable exertions, and unexceptionable conduct gave him, did certainly *bow down this excellent young man's feelings with much sorrow*." How truly thankful would many a young man, aye, and many an old man, with far more solid claims upon the Church than those of the late Rev. Robert Bathurst—always excepting the fact of his being the son of a Bishop—be, even at this time of day, to find himself weighed down with the sorrowful lot of "not above 500*l.* a-year clear from the Church!" As regards the Archdeacon himself, the Bishop's eldest son, he took care that his lot should be less sorrowful, as appears from his account of the family discussions which preceded his appointment to the Rectory of Hollesley in Suffolk. The Bishop, we are told by his pious and dutiful son, was about to give the living to "a stranger,"—not, as might be supposed from this expression, to some deserving clergyman unconnected with the Bishop by any private ties; such an enormity even Bishop Bathurst did not dream of committing,—but "a distant relative of his wife in Ireland, out of an idea of serving one of his wife's most distant relatives, whom he never saw; a feeling," his biographer remarks, "of the most creditable kind, but which the Archdeacon thought rather *romantic*." Eventually the difficulty was got over by the very unromantic process of adding the living of Hollesley, worth 830*l.* a-year, to the Archdeacon's other preferments, already amounting to upwards of 1,200*l.* per annum; making a total of 2,000*l.* a-year, as the reward of the singular merit of being a Bishop's son, to a man whose chief, if not his only, title to the gratitude of the Church is his unblushing effrontery in exposing the system of nepotism which, some twenty-five

or thirty years ago, was the recognised rule for the distribution of Church patronage. For, although not all who acted upon and profited by that system have been equally candid with the author to whom we are indebted for the foregoing illustrations, historic truth requires us to add, that this mode of dealing with ecclesiastical patronage was not confined to the See of Norwich, or to the statesmen of one party. It is no part of the object of these pages to ransack the *chronique scandaleuse* of Church preferment; nor is it necessary to multiply individual instances of that which is sufficiently notorious, that, as a rule, and with exceedingly rare exceptions, the ecclesiastical dignities in the gift of the Crown were conferred from political considerations, or upon the ground of party or personal connexions; and that the patronage attached to them was considered as part and parcel of the emoluments of the office, to be appropriated by the owner to his own private benefit in the advancement of his family and friends.

We cannot draw this sketch of the condition of the Church about the middle of the first half of the present century to a conclusion without adverting to one fact which, of itself, speaks volumes—the fact that, during the course of an episcopate extending over thirty-six years, for twenty-three of which he occupied the Metropolitan See of Canterbury, as “*alterius orbis Papa*,” the predecessor of Dr. Howley did not publish a single charge. If we except a paper on some British species of *Orobanche*, in the Transactions of the Linnæan Society, two solitary sermons, preached during his occupancy of the See of Norwich—one, a fast-day sermon before the House of Lords, on the breaking out of the war with the French Republic; the other, an Anniversary Sermon for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, both cold and meagre productions, published, as a matter of *étiquette*, the former by order of the House, the latter in the Society’s Report,—are the only traces discoverable in the literature

of England of the existence of one who filled the highest and most responsible station in the English Church for nearly a quarter of a century, and during one of the most eventful and critical periods in the history of modern Europe.

Considering what was, at the time to which the foregoing description applies, the condition of the Church; considering, too, what had been her antecedents during the previous century, it cannot be matter of surprise that, after a long lull of dead indifference, a storm of active hostility should gather on her horizon; that philosophical unbelief should impugn her doctrines, sectarian religionism assail her position as an establishment, and the Church of Rome once more conceive the hope of overthrowing that one Church which, alone in all Christendom, had sustained the cause of Evangelic Truth, undivided from Apostolic order, against the corruptions and usurpations of the Papacy. The first indications of the rising storm were clearly discerned by some of the Prelates upon whose charges we have already so largely drawn for information, and they gave warning to their clergy of the coming conflict. "A learned clergy," said Bishop Burgess, in a charge delivered to the clergy of Salisbury in 1826, "was never more necessary to the Church for the maintenance of true religion than it is at this day, in opposition to the errors of Popery, Unitarianism, and Fanaticism, and to provide against the probable consequences of the Mechanic Institution."

In reference to the movement last alluded to, which was then in its infancy, and of which the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge and the London University were the more important developments, the Bishop adds:—"If we may judge prospectively of the experiment, (for at present it can hardly be viewed in any other light), it seems likely to verify the common observation, that 'a little learning is a dangerous thing.' The institution may

give mechanics science enough to excite doubts in religion, without knowledge enough to solve them. It may create difficulties, and at the same time encourage that leaning to their own understandings which resists conviction." These anticipations, it is well known, have been but too fully realized by the alienation from the Church, and, it is to be feared, from all sense of religion, of the great bulk of artisans, mechanics, factory labourers, and, generally, the male portion, at least, of the working population of our towns.

Next to the developments of infidelity, founded on superficial and one-sided scientific knowledge, the attitude assumed by the various denominations of Protestant Dissenters attracted the attention of the more vigilant among the Bishops. The assurances of a friendly disposition towards the establishment, which they put forward for the more effectual advancement of their own ends, though they succeeded in deceiving some, were by others set down at their true value. Bishop Van Mildert, in his primary charge, delivered in 1827, thus adverts to the subject: "When we are called upon to break down the very fences and bulwarks of our establishment, in proof of our goodwill, this is asking, not merely for amity and forbearance, but for favour and encouragement. It is to forget that the very same sincerity which inclines *us* to uphold our opinions and to inculcate them upon others, must in reason be supposed to incline persons of contrary persuasions to do the same. To justify us in demurring to such a proposal, we assume only that *they* are as sincere as *we* are; and we thence infer that *ascendancy* is probably their object no less than *ours*."

On the dangers by which the Church was menaced from the revival of Popish pretensions, some highly appropriate remarks occur in the charge delivered by Bishop Burgess of Salisbury at his primary visitation in 1826, in which he calls the attention of the clergy to the duty enjoined

by the very first canon of our Church, whereby the clergy are "required, four times every year at the least, in their sermons and lectures, to maintain the King's supremacy, and to teach that no foreign Power hath any jurisdiction within this realm. If," the Bishop continues, "this duty had been constantly performed since the first promulgation of the canon, there would, probably, have been at this day no question among Protestants of the Church of England, respecting the justice or policy of admitting to any share of political power in this country any persons who refuse to acknowledge the King's entire supremacy in his own dominions, and at the same time submit themselves to a foreign Power, held by them, in ecclesiastical concerns, to be superior to the sovereignty of the realm."

The general spirit of innovation which had seized upon the public mind, did not escape the acute observation of Bishop Van Mildert, who, in the charge from which we have already quoted, thus refers to it: "An attentive observer of passing events can hardly fail to perceive in the present times an increasing indifference towards ancient institutions, and a disposition to make *experiments* in matters relating to Church and State, rather than to be guided by *experience*. Under the plausible appearance of new discoveries in civil and religious polity, and of more enlarged and enlightened views of both, than have been hitherto taken, even by the wisest of our predecessors, a sort of warfare is now waged with *established* opinions, chiefly (as it seems) *because they are established*, and because, having originated in earlier times, they are now (as is contended), become unfit for a more advanced period of society." And, further on, the same Prelate observes: "A more distinct view of these dangers than we might otherwise so clearly apprehend, is sometimes almost forced upon us by our opponents themselves, who, however at variance with each other on many essential points, declare their readiness to suspend, for a time, their mutual dis-

agreements, that they may the more successfully co-operate in one common purpose, that of obtaining for every religious persuasion an entire equality of immunities and privileges, and, consequently, raising every religious sect and party to a level with the Established Church."

It is not a little singular, and may serve yet further to illustrate the character of the times of which we are speaking, that with so general a sense of imperfections and disorders within, and in the presence of such formidable dangers from without, it should not have suggested itself to observant and thoughtful minds, that the most, if not the only, effectual way to remedy the former and to encounter the latter, was for the Church to take counsel with herself, and to gird herself to energetic action in her corporate capacity. Such an idea does not appear to have at any time gained ground, or assumed a practical form; on the contrary, no sooner was it mooted, which it was upon one or two occasions, than it met with decided discouragement. One of those most favourably disposed, in the abstract, towards the principle of synodal action, Bishop Huntingford, deprecated any attempt to revive it in the Church of England. "Of the national synod," he observed in his charge to the clergy of Hereford, in 1825, "to which allusion is made at the end of our canons and constitutions ecclesiastical, the substance has vanished, the form only remains. We are, indeed, at certain periods, summoned to 'Convocation,' but that word is now almost become a '*nomen inutile*.' Would it were otherwise; for, had its meetings been regular, and efficiency maintained, through the several years in which it hath been comparatively annihilated and really degraded, there is reason to believe, the encouragement of blasphemy, the profane attacks on religion, and the vile publications for the horrid purpose of corrupting morals,—all which banes of piety, of virtue, of social happiness, we have so long witnessed and so deeply deplored, would have been much less pre-

valent." After adverting, in illustration of these remarks, to the influence exercised by the General Assembly in Scotland, the Bishop proceeds,—“That the annual Convocations of numerous clergy assembled for many weeks, and that their grave deliberations, on topics either immediately or indirectly connected with religion, would have no weight in retarding the progress of impiety and vice in this nation, seems quite improbable. Such ideas of spiritual benefits resulting from ‘Convocations,’ may at least be conceived in our minds; but exertion of endeavours for revival of them in full force, cannot be recommended for practice. Thousands, indeed, there are who would co-operate in any measures calculated for the diminution of moral and spiritual evil. With reference, however, to popular opinion, it is to be feared the confession must be “*Ad hæc tempora, quibus nec vitia nostra, nec remedia pati possumus, perventum est.*”

Similar in effect was the language held about the same time by one who more recently became a warm supporter of the Convocation movement, the late Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol. Being, at the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury which assembled with the new Parliament in November, 1826, chosen Prolocutor of the Lower House, Dr. Monk took occasion, in the speech which it was his duty to address to the Synod, to assign what he considered sufficient reasons against the contemplated proposal of an address to the Crown for licence to proceed to business. His argument for leaving the Convocation in a state of inaction was, that “if it handled weighty matters, the people and the legislature would cry out against the clergy as taking too much upon themselves; if, on the contrary, it treated only of matters of small moment, the sacrifice of time on the part of so many clergy, and their absence from their cures for a great part of the year, as well as the expenditure of money which it must entail, would be incurred without any adequate

compensation. Besides, who could answer that hurtful discussions might not arise?" For these reasons he concluded it was far better for the Church that she should be compelled to leave herself wholly in the hands of the Bishops. And in this view of the matter the entire Episcopate and the great majority of the Lower House acquiesced.

Timidity, the spirit of fear, which dictated these sentiments, was, in fact, the prevailing spirit in the Church at that day; a fact of which no more forcible illustration could be given than the following extract from a letter addressed, about the year 1820, to Bishop Bathurst of Norwich, by the late Archbishop Howley, who then occupied the See of London. "We are living," says that excellent prelate, "in very dangerous times, and what will be the issue, God only knows. We suffer, like the Greeks and Trojans,

Ambitione, dolo, scelere, atque libidine, et ira,

and perhaps the event may be the same:—

*Εσσεται ἡμαρ, ὅταν ποτ' ὀλώλῃ Ἰλίου ἱρή,
καὶ Πριάμος, καὶ λαὸς εὐμμελίῳ Πριάμοιο.*

or, in Pope's more emphatic paraphrase,

*When Priam's sons and Priam's self shall fall,
And one prodigious ruin bury all,*

"Indeed, I think it not unlikely, that while we are squabbling who is in fault, we shall all go together."

Feelings of despondency like these were not, however, universal. At a period when the dangers which had long menaced the Church, had assumed a far more threatening character, we have from the pen of one who still survives as one of the veterans of the Episcopal Bench, the present Bishop of Bangor, in a charge addressed, in the summer of 1828, to the clergy of the diocese of Gloucester, the following noble sentiments:—

“It may be that causes tending to weaken and destroy the constitutional character and lawful pre-eminence of our Church, may be working their way in silence, and leading to eventful changes. But whatever trust is committed to us, in aid and furtherance of our spiritual charges, we must endeavour to maintain, and to hand down unimpaired to our successors in this ministry. At all events, whatever may befall our privileges or possessions as an establishment, our Church itself stands upon the sure basis of soundness of doctrine and primitive polity, and will not cease to be the Church in seasons of adversity.”


Such, then, was the aspect of our Church, such her position, as reflected in the views and feelings of her Chief Pastors, at the time when the death of Dr. Charles Manners Sutton, and the consequent elevation of Dr. Howley to the Archiepiscopal Chair, made room, in the important See of London, for the man whose mind and character have left their impress upon her history during the period which has since elapsed, and which it is the object of these pages to pass in review.





CHAPTER II.

Charles James Blomfield—His Birth and Parentage—Early Education—Academical Career—Diaconate—Curacy of Chesterford—Presbyterate—Rectory of Quarrington—Rectory of Dunton—Visitation Sermon—Views of the Clerical Office—Hesitating tone respecting Schism—Deep Sense of Ministerial Responsibility—Presentiment of the coming Conflict—United Benefices of Great and Little Chesterford—Rectory of Tuddenham—Domestic Chaplain to Bishop Howley—Sermon on Canonical Adherence to the Ritual—Importance of the External of Religion—Familiarity of Preaching—Mutilation of the Baptismal Office—Rectory of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate—Archdeaconry of Colchester—Archidiaconal Charge—View of the Archidiaconal Office—Extent of Visitation Power—Sense of the Church's Danger—Exhortation to Unity of Spirit—Consecration to the Episcopate—Bishopric of Chester.

 CHARLES JAMES BLOMFIELD was born on the 29th of May, 1786, at Bury St. Edmund's, where his father kept a school, in which he received the first rudiments of his education. At the age of eight years he was entered in the grammar-school at Bury, the headmaster of which at that time was the Rev. Michael Thomas Becher, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, under whose able tuition he continued for ten years, and laid the groundwork of that solid and critical scholarship which gained for him early academical distinction, and a lasting reputation in classical literature. In October, 1804, he left the grammar-school of his native town for Trinity College, Cambridge, where, in the next year, he was elected scholar of his

college, and gained Sir William Browne's gold medal for the Latin Ode, on the death of the Duke of Enghien. The year after he gained the same prize for the Greek Ode, on the death of Nelson, and was elected Craven Scholar. In 1808, he took his B.A. degree as Third Wrangler, and First Chancellor's Medallist; and in 1809, he was elected Fellow of Trinity College. His subsequent degrees are—M.A. in 1811; B.D. in 1818; and D.D. in 1820.

At the close of his brilliant academical career, he obtained Holy Orders on his fellowship from the Head of his college, Bishop Mansell of Bristol. After his ordination to the diaconate, he served the curacy of Chesterford, in the diocese of London; and, having taken priest's Orders, he was, in October, 1810, presented by the present Marquis, then Earl, of Bristol to the rectory of Quarrington, Lincolnshire. In December of the following year, Earl Spencer presented him to the rectory of Dunton, in the diocese of Lincoln, which he continued to hold for upwards of five years. Of the light in which, at this early period, he viewed the clerical office, we have an interesting record in a sermon preached by him in June, 1815, at Aylesbury, on the occasion of the visitation of the Bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Tomline, in which, among other topics, he thus urged the necessity of a learned ministry:—

“It is the divine institution of the priesthood and the legal collation of it upon *us*, which alone can render it, spiritually speaking, an accountable office, and make us debtors to God for the talents entrusted to our keeping. From which truth arise two important considerations. We ought not, on the one hand, to be suspected of selfishness, in endeavouring to establish this point: because, if we succeed in doing so, we place ourselves in a predicament of great labour, difficulty, and danger: of labour, from the multiplicity and magnitude of those duties which an office of this nature must impose upon us; of difficulty, in

qualifying ourselves to perform them in an edifying and effectual manner ; and of danger, in proportion to the difficulty. On the other hand, it is not to be wondered at, if *we* lift up our voice against the intrusion of *those* who call themselves ministers, being such neither by divine institution, nor by legal collation ; because, even were we to allow that the responsibleness of this office is not necessarily dependent upon regular ordination to it, yet the extreme danger which must result from misinterpreting important texts of Scripture to simple and unlearned people, places in a strong point of view the temerity of those men who, without any previous qualifications, undertake the exposition of those sacred mysteries which even we, who have been brought up in the 'schools of the prophets,' venture upon with diffidence and fear. For although there can be no doubt but that the Scriptures are a book intended for the comfort and instruction of all Christian people without distinction ; and that to debar them from the perusal of it, is to prevent their access to the wellspring of life ; although the main doctrines of the Gospel be laid down in so plain and perspicuous a manner that to understand them requires no other qualifications than a sound head and a sincere heart ; yet it is no less certain that many parts of the Sacred Volume, which have a peculiar reference to the circumstances of time and place under which they were written, are for that reason *necessarily* obscure and ambiguous to the unlearned reader, and, of consequence, liable to be perverted to a mischievous sense. Of many passages in the Apostolical Epistles, in particular, no man can reasonably pretend to develop the exact drift and application, who has not previously qualified himself for the task, by obtaining an accurate knowledge of the language in which the originals were written, of the particular objects which the writers had in view, of the circumstances and opinions of those whom they addressed. The methods of acquiring this

knowledge it would be presumptuous and useless for me to specify; but an endeavour to acquire it is evidently a most essential part of *his* duty who undertakes to be an expositor of Scripture; and it is one which demands no trifling expenditure of time and mind; for there is no compendious road in divinity; no extraordinary way, nor short cut to knowledge is now to be trusted; we have no reason to suppose that men in these days grow wise by special inspiration, nor by any other method than that of treading, with the assistance of God's grace, in the beaten paths of reading and meditation."

In these remarks it is evident that the scholar predominates over the churchman; and that the sense which the preacher had, not unnaturally, of the advantages of learning, was, at least, on a par with his appreciation of the Divine commission of the Christian ministry. The question at issue between the Church and dissent does not appear to have been thought out by him with sufficient clearness for him to venture decidedly to affirm the unlawfulness of schism. The same hesitating tone recurs in a sermon preached four months later at the first annual meeting of the Aylesbury District Committee of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, in the formation of which he took an active part. In arguing for the necessity of aids derived from the studies of the learned for the right interpretation of Holy Scripture, he observes:—

"To say that the Bible, when put into the hands of the unlearned, requires no comment, nor explanation, is to say that no important passage of Scripture can be misunderstood by the sincere inquirer after truth; and yet all the numberless sects into which the Christian world is divided, if questioned as to the authority on which they ground their contrary doctrines, refer us to the Bible. *It is not for us to determine whether the mansion of heaven be a palace with many gates*; but of the countless variety of

paths by which Christians seek to arrive at it some must surely be more direct and safe than others; and it is, therefore, our duty, at the same time that we point out to our weaker brethren the high prize of their calling, and teach them duly to appreciate its value, it is our duty, I say, to place them, if we can, in *that line of faith and practice which we ourselves believe to be the safest and the best.*"

This qualified mode of asserting the claims of the Church to the obedience of men, was evidently the effect of a natural diffidence of mind, increased, probably, by views not sufficiently matured, rather than of any tendency to latitudinarian sentiments and consequent fraternization with dissent. On the contrary, he felt most deeply, and deplored, as a great hindrance to the success of the Gospel, the many divisions among Christians, both within and without the Church. In reference to this point, another passage from his visitation sermon will not be read without interest:—

"The rewards of our faithfulness are not of this world; nor must we be disappointed or discouraged, if in this world we find them not. Although the relation which connects us with our flock, be mutual, and its duties should be mutually discharged, yet the failure of one party is no excuse for the deficiency of the other. Whatever be the measure of obedience which may be paid to us in our spiritual capacity, may the Almighty give *us* grace and wisdom on our part to use such endeavours that not a single soul shall by the fault of its ministers wander from the pale of our Church. By instructing, encouraging, and occasionally reproving those committed to our care; and, above all, by diligently educating the younger part of them in the principles of our established religion, we may still hope, if not to build up the breach which has been made in the unity of the Church, at least to stop the further progress of disunion. It is not yet too late for us

to 'put fresh incense on our censers, and to stand between the dead and the living.'

"If there be any circumstance, calculated to give additional importance to these considerations, it is the awful complexion of the times in which we live. A spirit of religious union and fraternal concord is rendered more than ever desirable by the storms which are again gathering over the horizon of civilized society. It well becomes us, who are of one household, to be all of one mind and spirit, and to cultivate that peaceable and conciliating disposition which is too apt to be forgotten, when 'the days of vengeance' come upon the earth, with 'distress of nations and perplexity.'"

The concluding words of this passage are remarkable as indicating the presentiment which, even as a young man, on the threshold of his ministerial life, Bishop Blomfield had of the character of the times upon which his lot had fallen, and of the conflict which actually awaited him at every step of his subsequent and singularly eventful career.

Within two years after he gave utterance to these sentiments, he was once more brought back to the diocese in which he had commenced his pastoral labours, and over which he was destined eventually to preside for so many years. The united vicarage and rectory of Great and Little Chesterford, on which he had served in his curacy, having become vacant, he was presented to it, in July, 1817, by the patron, the Earl of Bristol, who, shortly after, gave him, in addition, the rectory of Tuddenham, Suffolk. About the same time, Dr. Howley, who had, in 1813, been consecrated to the See of London, appointed him one of his domestic chaplains. In this capacity he preached, in July, 1818, at Saffron Walden, on the occasion of the Bishop's second triennial visitation, a sermon not less remarkable for the decision of its tone, than for the connexion of its subject with the controversy which

so long and painfully disturbed the latter years of his episcopate. It was published by the Bishop's command, and bears the title "The Duty of a Canonical Adherence to the Ritual of the Church." In it the "many paths" leading to the "many gates of the palace of heaven" vanish out of sight: the Church stands before us in bold and prominent relief, as "the King's daughter, all glorious within," with "her clothing of wrought gold." The main topic of the discourse is the character of the Church as a visible Church; and this character of the Church, bringing externals in aid of spiritual piety, is set forth as a necessary and merciful adaptation, on the part of the Divine Founder of the Church, to the wants of man's nature. After contending, at considerable length, for the principle of a visible Church, and of the use of externals in religion, the preacher proceeds to animadvert upon the practice which at this time had become very prevalent, of holding "prayer meetings"* in unconsecrated places, in which the liturgy of the Church was laid aside, and religious exercises were conducted by the clergyman, or by others in his presence, in accordance with the usages of the conventicle. The tendency which led to these uncanonical religious assemblies, manifested itself at the same time, in the performance of the regular service of

* The extent to which this practice had infringed upon the order of the Church, may be gathered from the following passage of a note appended to the sermon:—"I would earnestly entreat certain of my brethren to consider, that the sanction which they give by their presence and ministry to those anomalous assemblies which are called 'prayer meetings,' must tend directly to weaken, in the minds of their flock, that sense of the utility and importance of public worship which it should be *their* constant duty to strengthen and keep alive. I have been informed that in some cases the parochial minister has taken to his aid a lay assistant, or deputy, whose province it is to perform the extra-canonical offices of devotion, and to teach the people, by degrees, to regard with indifference the legitimate and apostolic form of ordination to the ministry."

the Church, by sundry deviations from its prescribed order. On this point the preacher observes :

“I cannot but remark, that if the canons of the Church were uniformly observed, if not in all cases literally, at least according to the spirit of them ; and if the office of Common Prayer were always performed in a manner calculated to give full force to its energetic and dignified expression of devotion ; if we could all bear in mind, how much depends upon the place, the air, nay, the garb, in which the minister of the Gospel is seen by his flock, preceding and directing their public devotions : if, I say, the ordinances of the Church were thus brought into full play, and had scope to produce their effect,—a great number of our Christian brethren would entertain more just and worthy notions of religion, at least of social worship, than we now find to prevail.” And towards the conclusion of his discourse he thus urges the duty of adherence to the ritual : “Let us bear in mind that the Church should, in external guise and semblance, in visible majesty and propriety, be in some degree emblematic of that glorified spouse of Christ ‘in whose light the nations of them that are saved shall walk ; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour into it.’ To decency and order nothing is more necessary than uniformity of practice ; and until something better than the ritual and canons of our Church can be devised, for the purpose of promoting the growth of spiritual and intrinsic piety, by the judicious and well-regulated application of decent solemnity, let us not, my brethren, by unauthorized and individual innovations weaken that effect, so much of which depends upon consistency ; nor endeavour, in compliance with our own taste or judgment, to alter the fashion of that ‘clothing of wrought gold,’ the lustre of which, thanks be to God, still remains, after the lapse of ages, undiminished and unimpaired.”

The following remarks, introduced in the course of this

sermon, on the style of preaching which was then common among dissenters, and was, in imitation of them, affected by certain of the clergy, are worthy of notice, both on account of their intrinsic value and force, and as indications of the preacher's tone of mind: "To teach our simple and unwary brethren, that there is nothing awful or sublime in religion; to speak of the Divine attributes and operations in coarse and colloquial language; to endeavour to lower its truths to their comprehension, instead of elevating, by gradual and judicious instruction, their minds to the comprehension of its truths: to address the Deity in the phrase of personal endearment; to talk to them of their Divine Saviour, the uncreated Son of God, in words which we should hesitate to apply to an earthly superior; to debase their notions of the sanctifying Spirit, by persuading them that they need be at no trouble to secure His influence or to retain it; and *thus* to make religion familiar to them,—is surely a method of edification not more inconsistent with all our notions of the reverence due to our Almighty Maker and Redeemer, than with the language of the Apostles, whose writings afford no example whatever of the confident familiarity with which some presume to approach the mercy-seat of God."

One other topic, bearing, not upon the ritual only, but upon the doctrine of the Church, is touched upon, not in the sermon itself, but in a note appended to it, which ought not to be passed over in this place, since it affords a significant indication of the views entertained by the future Bishop on a subject which, likewise, rose into great importance during his episcopate, and furnishes us with a characteristic exhibition of the tone of authority which, on all matters on which he felt strongly, was natural to his mind, and which was certainly more suited to the episcopal office with which he was subsequently invested, than to the position which, as Bishop's chaplain, he occupied at the time.

"I cannot refrain," he says, "from adding a few words upon another irregular practice, to call it by no harsher name, which I have reason to believe, prevails amongst some of the clergy who embrace the peculiar tenets of Calvin; I mean a custom of curtailing and mutilating the service of Baptism, so as to bring it somewhat nearer to their own notions of regeneration. I leave them to reconcile, as they are able, with their own consciences, this departure from the terms of that solemn declaration to which they subscribed 'willingly and *ex animo*,' upon entering into Holy Orders: the second article of which is, 'that the Book of Common Prayer containeth in it nothing contrary to the Word of God, and it may lawfully so be used, and *that he himself will use the form in the said book prescribed* in public prayer and administration of the sacraments, AND NONE OTHER.'* The fourteenth Canon (to which every minister has declared that he will conform), directs that 'all ministers shall observe the orders, rites and ceremonies, prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, as well in reading the Holy Scriptures and saying of prayers, *as in administration of the Sacraments*, without either *diminishing*, in regard of preaching, or in any other respect, or adding anything in the matter or form thereof.' And, as the framers of the Liturgy have well observed, 'although the keeping or omitting of a ceremony, in itself considered, is but a small thing, yet the wilful and contemptuous transgression and breaking of a common order and discipline, is no small offence before God. *Let all things be done among you*, saith St. Paul, *in a seemly and due order*; the appointment of which order pertaineth not to private men: therefore no man ought to take in hand, nor presume to appoint or alter any public or common order in Christ's Church, except he be lawfully called and authorized thereunto.' I mention the subject here, chiefly as affording a satisfactory proof that some, who impugn

* The italics and capitals are the writer's own.

the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, find the language of our Church, in this solemn service, too plain to be misconstrued, too strong to be eluded. Their only resource, therefore, is to blot out so much of it as they cannot digest; although it is difficult to say what is too hard for *their* digestion, who can wilfully alter and deprave the prescribed form of administering a sacrament, to which they have declared their unfeigned assent and consent. To those who think themselves authorized by a spiritual illumination thus to deviate from that line of public duty which they have solemnly bound themselves to observe, we may recommend the just and sensible caution of the Fathers of our Church: 'It is no part of a Christian, under pretence of the Holy Ghost, to bring his own dreams and phantasies into the Church.' '*

After such an expression of his sentiments, on so public an occasion as the Bishop's visitation of the diocese, there could be no mistake as to what might be expected of Dr. Howley's chaplain, if he were placed in positions of greater authority and influence. Bishop Howley, so remarkable for his discrimination of character, did not fail to discover in him the qualifications of mind and character which fitted him for the exercise of rule in the Church, and accordingly marked him out for higher preferment. On the living of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, becoming vacant he presented him, in May, 1820, to this the richest benefice in the gift of the See of London. Within two years after, in January, 1822, he appointed him Archdeacon of Colchester. The only charge delivered by him in that office, at his primary visitation, is another remarkable document, evincing a keen sense of the causes which impaired the efficiency of the Church, and an earnest determination to do his best to procure their removal, by a strict and diligent exercise of the duties of his office.

* Homily for Whit-Sunday, Part II.

A considerable portion of it is occupied in defining the nature and extent of the duties appertaining to the archidiaconal office, and is replete with interest, on account both of the information which it conveys, and of the light which it throws upon the character of the man who was then on the eve of being raised to the Episcopate. "In the earlier periods of the Church," he observes, "the archdeacon appears to have exercised a simple scrutatorial authority, delegated to him by the Bishop, when prevented from visiting his diocese in person; for the purpose of inquiring into such things, concerning the Church and its ministers, as required correction, and of reporting the same to his principal. In process of time, however, and by steps which are not now distinctly to be traced, those officers came to have the power of visitation vested in them by right: and with the right of inquiry they obtained the right of correction; according to a maxim of the civil law, 'that he who has authority of inquiring into defects, must also have authority to correct them.' Thus the original jurisdiction which of right belonged exclusively to the Bishop, was in some way or other, probably by consent, perhaps by custom, communicated to the archdeacons, and in some places to the deans of cathedral churches. So that the jurisdiction which the archdeacon now exercises, is exercised *jure ordinario*; and in those cases to which it extends, he is the immediate Ordinary, although it may be expedient that he should forbear from exercising authority, as such, except in his more plain and obvious functions, as visitor of all ecclesiastical fabrics and possessions; leaving questions of a higher and more delicate nature to the determination of the superior Ordinary. In point of law, however, the archdeacon may take cognizance, in his court, of all irregularities and defects into which he may inquire as visitor. What these are, will appear from an enumeration of the duties enjoined upon him by the ecclesiastical laws of the realm. No inconsiderable number of

these duties have long fallen into disuse : some of which it is not necessary, and others it would not be expedient, to recall into activity. The former class have been happily rendered useless by the learning and piety of the parochial clergy ; the latter have become almost impracticable, from the altered state of society. Yet still it is a matter of discretion with the person who fills the office, to determine, which of its branches he shall execute, according to the *letter* of his instructions, and which he shall suffer to sleep in desuetude, from a regard to the *spirit* of his commission, and to the ends of all ecclesiastical authority, the good order and well-being of the Church.

“The general duty of the archdeacon is, to ascertain whether there be anything that wants correction and amendment, either in persons or things ecclesiastical, within his jurisdiction, and to correct and amend them.”

This view of the archidiaconal office, its powers and proper functions, is supported at great length by reference to historical facts and documents, to various canonical writings, and to customs and precedents since the Reformation. Among the authorities appealed to, is that of Bishop Beveridge, “the most distinguished of his predecessors in the archdeaconry,” who holds the archdeacon bound “to visit so much of the diocese as is under his jurisdiction, once a year, or oftener, if needs be,—to inspect, and what in him lies, to reform all irregularities, either in clergy or laity.” After a further reference to the Act of Uniformity, the following is stated to be the result to which the inquiry into the history and nature of his office had led Archdeacon Blomfield :—“The jurisdiction, therefore, of the archdeacon over persons, as well as things, ecclesiastical,—or, at all events, his visitatorial authority, is placed beyond dispute ; and although the Reformation, while it purified the doctrine of our Church, produced, by degrees, such a learned and able clergy as to supersede the necessity of many of those provisions for the

instruction and regulation of the parochial ministry, yet I consider it still to be a part of the duty of that officer, if not publicly to notice and correct, yet at least to communicate to the Bishop any irregularities in the performance of the public offices of the Church, or in the externals of religion, which may have come to his knowledge. There are many points of this description which, from the frequency and particular nature of his visitations, are more likely to come under his cognizance, than under that of the Diocesan; and the whole tenour of his office is such, as to render it his bounden duty to 'detect unto the Bishop,' all who shall offend therein. Archbishop Wake, speaking of the yearly visitations of the dioceses, originally performed by the Bishop, but afterwards delegated to the archdeacon, observes,—“nor are those venerable persons ever more properly, what they are commonly styled, the *eyes of the Bishop*, than when they discharge this part of their office; and by looking into every corner of the diocese, not only to see themselves, but communicate to him, what the state of it is, and wherein it needs to be corrected or reformed.”

But while expressing his intention to give to the archidiaconal office its full force and effect, Archdeacon Blomfield did not lose sight of the fact, that whatever had to be done with a view to set the Church in order, no success could be expected unless the work was taken in hand in a spirit of brotherly kindness and conciliation. Of this the following passage from the charge bears pleasing evidence, while it may serve further to illustrate the sense of danger to the Church, of which he appears to have become increasingly conscious:—“The feelings of reciprocal kindness which the spirit of our profession is so well calculated to excite, ought to receive additional force and liveliness from the peculiar complexion of the age in which we live. External pressure upon every side of a body naturally increases the solidity and coherence of its parts. The

opposition and calumnies of those who 'have evil will at Sion,' may be expected to produce at least one good result, by uniting more closely all her defenders and friends. Above all, her teachers must surely feel it to be no less their interest than their duty to 'dwell together in unity; standing fast in one spirit, with one mind; striving together for the faith of the Gospel, and in nothing terrified by their adversaries.' The providence of God sometimes makes the opposers of the Gospel to be the unwilling instruments of its promotion. Such will be the case when the ministers of the Church are awakened, by the attacks of its adversaries, to a sense of their own danger, and excited to use an increased diligence in the performance of their sacred duties. While *we* continue true to our own character and office; while we labour conscientiously, each in the province assigned to him by the Church, we have nothing to apprehend from the enemies of religion and good order. A pious and charitable dedication of ourselves to those who are committed to our care; a spirit of forbearance and indulgence towards the erring and the weak, and of brotherly love and kindness towards one another, will give invincible strength to the arguments by which we may be called upon, from time to time, to prove the legitimacy and usefulness of our office."

This charge, in which there is, unquestionably, as much of the *os* as of the *oculus episcopi*, was delivered in May, 1823; and in the following year the death of Bishop Beadon, of Bath and Wells, made a vacancy on the Episcopal Bench, which Lord Liverpool, acting, doubtless, with the advice of Bishop Howley, determined to fill by the elevation of the Archdeacon of Colchester to the Episcopate. Dr. Law, then Bishop of Chester, was translated to the See of Bath and Wells, and the bishopric of Chester was conferred on the son of the Bury schoolmaster, who, as one of the public organs bore testimony at the time, owed his rank in the Church "purely to his

merits and eminent acquirements." He was consecrated at Whitehall Chapel on the first Sunday after Trinity, June 20, 1824, by Dr. Vernon Harcourt, the late Archbishop of York ; the consecration sermon being preached by John Lonsdale, the present Bishop of Lichfield, at that time domestic chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury.





CHAPTER III.

Administration of the See of Chester—Restoration of the Archdeaconry of Richmond—Exclusion of Irish Candidates for Orders—Interference of Bishop Bathurst—Mr. Henry Brougham and the "Times"—The Card-playing Bishop—Controversy with Mr. Charles Butler—Vindication of the English Clergy—Insidious Character of the Romish System—Bishop Blomfield in the House of Lords—Romish Claims—Doctrine of Papal Supremacy—Lord Holland and Lord King—Roman Catholic Relief Bill of 1825—Questions at Issue—Vicious state of Society in Ireland—Real Objects of the Cry for "Emancipation"—Clear Anticipation of its Political Effects—Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts—The Bill supported by the Bishops—Opposition of the High Tory Peers—True Principles of Toleration and of Political Exclusion—History of the Corporation and Test Acts—Their Practical Working—Objectionable Character of the Sacramental Test—Illusory "Bulwarks" of the Church—The Church's true Strength—Exclusion of Religion from Public Institutions—Severance of Religion from Education—Confidence in the Religious Sense of the Country—Visitation Charge—Strict Observance of the Church's Law—Ritual Conformity—Clerical Provident Fund—Her "Usefulness" the Church's Title to Support—Necessity of Strengthening the Position of the Church.

ONE of the first acts of Bishop Blomfield, after taking possession of his see, was an act of restoration, in proof of his desire to "strengthen the things that remained." Since the foundation of the See of Chester, in 1541, the endowments and jurisdiction of the archdeaconry of Richmond had been transferred to the bishopric, reserving to the archdeacon only his title, dignity, a stall in the cathedral, and a small stipend out

of his ancient revenues. The archidiaconal jurisdiction transferred to the Bishop along with the revenues had been exercised ever since by the Bishop's commissary, who was not necessarily, and as a matter of fact was not always, in Holy Orders. The letters patent under the episcopal seal, under which the commissary exercised his jurisdiction, constituted him at the same time Rural Dean of all the deaneries within the diocese; and he acted also as judge in the Bishop's Consistory Court at Richmond. Bishop Blomfield, on coming to the see, effected, with the concurrence of the commissary in possession, an arrangement by which the office and functions of the Archdeacon were restored, and appointed to that office the Rev. John Headlam, who had hitherto acted as Deputy Commissary, and who had no personal or private connexion with him.

Another measure to which the new Bishop of Chester had recourse, with a view to raise the character of the clergy of his diocese was, to check the influx of candidates for Holy Orders from the sister island,—some of them native Irishmen, others, though of English extraction, graduates of Dublin University,—by whom that diocese had been inundated under his predecessor, as it was again afterwards under his successor. This determination, which,—though Bishop Blomfield had, doubtless, excellent reasons for it,—was naturally unpopular on the other side of the Channel, involved him in an exceedingly unpleasant dispute with Bishop Bathurst of Norwich. That Prelate, having been applied to by a gentleman whose son was desirous of obtaining employment in the diocese of Chester, but was discouraged by the known determination of the Bishop not to admit candidates from Ireland, scrupled not to ordain the young man, who, as soon as he had obtained Orders, proceeded to exercise the clerical office in the diocese of Chester without any reference to its Bishop. The result of this gross violation of all eccle-

siastical order was, that Bishop Blomfield interdicted the young man from officiating in his diocese, and addressed a formal complaint against the Bishop of Norwich to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, as in duty bound, pointed out to Bishop Bathurst the impropriety of his conduct. By some means or other—not impossibly through Bishop Bathurst's own son, the Archdeacon,—an account of this circumstance reached the office of *The Times*, to which there is reason to believe that Mr. Henry (now Lord) Brougham was at that time a leading contributor; and the consequence was a scurrilous attack upon Bishop Blomfield, in which that prelate was represented as having informed against his brother of Norwich for his practice of playing at cards. A violent discussion ensued in the newspapers, in which the *John Bull* took up the cudgels against *The Times*, on behalf of the Bishop of Chester; and the matter ended by the latter journal being compelled to give a true statement of the facts furnished by Archdeacon Bathurst, and to accompany it with an *amende honorable*, which it did with its usual bad grace. It was on this occasion that the Bishop of Norwich made the memorable declaration before referred to, that a game at cards was “his only resource on a winter's evening,” and that he had no intention of relinquishing his favourite pastime. The part which Dr. Blomfield had taken in this business, though strictly confined to the defence of his diocese against an inroad of the grossest ecclesiastical irregularity, was never forgiven by Bishop Bathurst and his son, the archdeacon, who, in his memoir of his father, after complaining of the neglect which his father and all his family had experienced at the hands of their Whig patrons, adds, with great bitterness, that “there could hardly be any necessity to mark this proscription with *the insult to the Bishop of Norwich*, of appointing Dr. Blomfield to the see of London, as a reward, as it were, for *the still reeking affront offered to this venerable Prelate* by a

man without any one of his pretensions to merit, and not half his age."

An occasion of greater importance, which brought the name of Bishop Blomfield prominently before the public, shortly after his elevation to the see of Chester, was his controversy with Mr. Charles Butler, the learned and able advocate of the Romish claims. That gentleman, in his answer to Southey's *Book of the Church*, more than insinuated that the doctrines respecting the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Divinity of Christ, and the Atonement, were not seriously and sincerely believed, either by the great body of the English clergy, or by the great body of the English laity; and with regard to the former he tauntingly asked: "Do they not, to use Mr. Gibbon's expression, sign the thirty-nine articles *with a sigh or a smile?*" The Bishop's reply to this insinuation was a positive and indignant denial, on behalf of the clergy as well as the laity, both churchmen and dissenters; supporting the denial by such incontrovertible proof as the theological literature of the English Church abundantly supplied. Bishop Blomfield was not, however, content to dismiss the calumniator with the well-merited rebuke which he had administered to him, but availed himself of this opportunity to fix upon the Romanists of the present day the charge of still believing in the obnoxious and anti-social doctrines which had long been a standing reproach to their Church, and the cause of the civil disqualifications of which they at this time so loudly complained. In proof of this the Bishop adduced the words of the creed of Pope Pius IV, which pledge Romanists to "profess and undoubtedly receive all things delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred canons and general councils, and particularly by the holy council of Trent." From this and the following clause of the creed, condemning and anathematizing as heresies all things contrary to those decrees, the Bishop deduced with incontrovertible cogency the

inference, that the Romanists were not only bound to doctrines which, with a view to obtain admission to political power, they were at this time sedulously disclaiming, but that they were, by the same sweeping clause, involved in the reception of heretical propositions. Such a thrust as this from so able a hand placed the Romanists for a time at a great disadvantage. Mr. Charles Butler attempted a reply, but the facts being all on the side of his opponent,—who appended a rejoinder to the third edition of his letter, which was soon called for,—the victory remained with the latter; and the controversy, by opening the eyes of many to the insidious character of the Romish system, had its share, no doubt, in retarding, though it could not finally avert, that fatal inroad upon the constitution which has paved the way for a series of successive aggressions on the part of the Papacy.

It was not, however, in this controversy alone, that Bishop Blomfield at this time fought the battle of this Church and kingdom against the claims and pretensions of Rome. Although the see of Chester was one of the most inconsiderable of the English sees,—one of those which, under the system of translations which then prevailed, were generally chosen as doors of admission to the Episcopal Bench,—its new occupant speedily attained in the Senate the prominent position to which his character, talents, and attainments entitled him. The prorogation of Parliament having taken place within a few days of his consecration, Bishop Blomfield did not take the oaths and his seat till the commencement of the ensuing session, on the 3rd of February, 1825; and on the 28th of that month, the very date of his letter to Mr. Charles Butler, he made what may be called his maiden speech, though it was exceedingly short and evidently unpremeditated, since the few remarks which he addressed to the House were elicited by a violent attack made by Lord Holland upon a petition in favour of the Bill for the suppression of unlawful

societies in Ireland, which emanated from the Archdeacons and Clergy of the diocese of Bath and Wells, and was presented by their Diocesan. In answer to the imputations of want of charity cast upon the petitioners by Lord Holland and others of the liberal Peers, and in justification of the statements in the petition which had given rise to them, Bishop Blomfield assured the House that the doctrine of the supremacy of the Pope, to which the Romanists were too wise to allude in any document submitted to that House, was openly maintained, in his diocese, by a Roman Catholic journal, and by the Romish priests who "made no scruple to say that the churches of this kingdom had been theirs once, and that they expected they would be theirs again."

The Roman Catholic question was,—with the exception of a few words on the Dissenters' Marriage Bill, to which he expressed himself favourable, provided proper safeguards were introduced to prevent clandestine unions,—the only subject on which Bishop Blomfield spoke in Parliament during the first year of his episcopate. The discussions in which he was engaged were for the most part brief, called forth by the incessant fire of obloquy directed from the liberal benches against all who petitioned the House against the Roman Catholic claims. Lord Holland and Lord King, more particularly, distinguished themselves by the asperity of their remarks; and several sharp encounters took place between them and Bishop Blomfield, who was more than a match for them in argument, and was, accordingly, regarded by them with more than ordinary dislike.

On the 17th of May, however, in the year 1825, the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, sent up from the House of Commons, was brought under debate, on the order for the second reading; and on this occasion Bishop Blomfield delivered his sentiments against the Bill in a most impressive speech, which is, properly speaking, the first sample

of his parliamentary eloquence. After candidly avowing that the views which should influence his vote, were at variance with his early, though long since changed, opinions, and repelling with much warmth the imputation cast by the advocates of the Romish Church upon the Protestant Bishops of England, that in their opposition to those claims they were actuated by motives of base and sordid interest, he argued forcibly in support of the right of every community to exclude from offices of power those who hold opinions subversive of its constitution, and dangerous to its welfare.

Having thus cleared the question of the reproach of injustice, on account of the alleged denial of just rights, Bishop Blomfield proceeded to the consideration of the points really at issue, which he thus enumerated:—"The question is, my Lords, are the opinions held by Roman Catholics of such a nature as to unfit them for holding offices of trust and power, and more especially for being legislators in a Protestant state? that is one question. Another is, whether the exigency of the present case be such as should induce us, for the sake of avoiding probable dangers, to venture upon a great violation of constitutional principle? A third question is, whether the measure now before your Lordships will answer the purpose for which it is intended, that of pacification?"

Applying himself, in the first place, and chiefly, to the last of these questions, the Bishop drew a graphic picture of the evils of what he justly designated as "a radically vicious state of society," the result, mainly, of absenteeism; and contended that there was no connexion between the misery under which the bulk of the Irish population were suffering, and the claim to so-called "emancipation," beyond the fact that designing agitators made use of the discontent of the people for the advancement of their own ambitious ends, in the hope that by means of it they might succeed in accomplishing "their grand scheme,

the establishment of the Roman Catholic upon the ruins of the Protestant Church." The Bishop's serious protest against the "practical error in the diagnosis of Ireland's complaint," involved in the proposed measure of emancipation, and his confident prediction that no pacification, but a succession of aggressions, would result from it, if passed, attest the singular sagacity with which his mind forecast the consequences of a movement, the true springs of which he clearly discerned. "Have we no reason," he asked, after adverting to the attacks which had already been made upon the property of the Church in Ireland, "to apprehend still more daring attempts upon the property of the Church, when twenty or thirty Roman Catholic Members shall have found their way into the other House, pledged to support any measure against the tithe system, and sure of being re-elected by the priests at the next election, if they be lukewarm and inactive in the cause?" Prophetic words these, for which he was again: then had little cause to offer the apology he did, assuring the House that he had thought it his duty to enter into this part of the question, only because the Bishops had been repeatedly taunted with taking a merely religious and not a political view of the subject, and at the same time expressing his reluctance "to take upon himself a character, of which it had always been his endeavour to steer clear, that of a politician."

The remainder of the Bishop's speech on this evening was occupied with a demonstration, from evidence furnished by the Romanists themselves, of the implacable hostility of the Church of Rome to the Church of England, and of the unchanged character of the Papal system, more especially with regard to all those pretensions and doctrines of the Papacy, which rendered the admission of Roman Catholics to power a concession fraught with the utmost danger to the peace and the religion of the realm.

During the next two sessions no question came before

the House of Lords, on which Bishop Blomfield felt himself called upon to give an opinion ; and, therefore, true to his principle of eschewing the character of a politician, he never opened his lips, except to make some brief incidental remark, now and then, generally on the presentation of petitions. But in the Session of 1828 the order for the second reading of the Corporation and Test Acts Repeal Bill, once more drew forth his brilliant powers of debate. To that Bill he gave, in common with the rest of the Bishops, and with the Government of the day,—the Duke of Wellington's,—his hearty support. By taking this course, the Bishops drew upon themselves the animadversions of Lord Eldon, and of others of the high Tory Peers, who were opposed to all relaxation of the principle of the political ascendancy of the Established Church, and the yet greater mortification of finding themselves on the same side with Lord Holland, who moved the second reading, and with other opposition Peers, notoriously and avowedly hostile to the Church. Still, independently of the fact that it had practically become nugatory, the abolition of the sacramental test was so manifestly desirable on religious grounds, that it was impossible for the Bishops, as ministers of religion, to withhold their assent ; and although the hopes which some cherished of conciliating the goodwill of the Dissenters towards the Church by this concession, were disappointed, and the passing of the Bill was, undoubtedly, the first great breach made in the constitution, it is not easy to see what other course than that which they did take, the Bishops could have pursued.

The arguments advanced in vindication of that course by Bishop Blomfield place the whole question in a clear light, and certainly make out a complete case of justification. He felt it due to himself, however, while expressing his perfect readiness to concur in the measure—"I do," he said, "most cordially and unequivocally concur in it"—to preface his arguments in favour of it by a

distinct protest against the principles advanced by the promoters of the Bill, who had characterized the Corporation and Test Acts as "odious and unjustifiable restraints on religious liberty and civil rights." In answer to these views, Bishop Blomfield thus plainly and lucidly laid down the true principle which must govern the admission to power of those who dissent from the recognised religion of the State. "If it be assumed as a postulate that the general good of the community requires the maintenance of an Established Church, it is obvious that the Legislature is bound to extend to it that kind and degree of protection which is necessary for its security. And if there be any description of persons in the State who hold themselves bound in conscience, or at least are of necessity disposed, to do all in their power to subvert that Establishment, I maintain that the State has a right to exclude them from such offices as might confer upon them the power of injuring the Church; it being a principle universally acknowledged, and acted upon to a great extent in the institutions of this free country, that the civil rights of subjects may be circumscribed and limited for the general good. And it is extremely inaccurate, not to say disingenuous and unfair, to describe such limitations as a stigma affixed by intolerance to the profession of certain religious opinions. The opinions themselves may be perfectly true; and those who profess them may be thoroughly sincere: yet as long as those opinions render their professors disaffected towards the Church Establishment, which the public good requires to be maintained, so long may they be considered to disqualify them for certain offices. It is not a whit more unjust to exclude a man from office on account of his moral or intellectual peculiarities, than it is to exclude him on the ground of physical incapacity, or to deprive him of the right of choosing his representative, because he is not possessed of a certain amount of property."

While thus vindicating the principle on which the Corporation and Test Acts were originally founded, Bishop Blomfield appealed to history to exonerate the Church from the *odium* of having procured the enactment of exclusive laws against those who dissented from her doctrine and discipline. "It was not the Church," he observed, after referring to the history of the enactments in question, "which stigmatized the dissenters in their character of religionists; but it was the Legislature, which, having determined, for the sake of the general good, to protect and uphold the Church, said to the dissenters, 'We are persuaded, and the experience of the last thirty years has proved to us, that you are bent upon destroying the Establishment; we cannot, therefore, in justice to ourselves and to the State, admit you into offices which will give you the power of accomplishing your designs.'"

Turning from a consideration of the principles which justified the imposition of exclusive tests by the Legislature, Bishop Blomfield next applied himself to that question which was generally uppermost in his mind, the question, namely, what had been the practical working of the Corporation and Test Acts. On this question he stated his conviction that the acts had failed to effect the object proposed, either before or after the passing of the Annual Indemnity Bill; and that they had, on the contrary, proved injurious to the Church. Even before the passing of an annual dispensation from the test, the more moderate among the dissenters had never scrupled at occasional acts of communion with the Church, while the more conscientious dissenters were more completely alienated from the Church, revolting as they did from an occasional conformity, at which, as an evidence of Christian charity, they might not scruple, when it was required of them as a means of obtaining office. There was, however, a far higher ground on which Bishop Blomfield felt that the abolition of the test in question was not only to be con-

ceded, but actually desired, in the interest of the Church and of religion. The views which he expressed on this subject in his place in the House of Lords, though not universally acquiesced in at that time, are doubtless those of the great body of the clergy and laity of the Church, now that the subject has passed away into the domain of history, and its consideration has become freed from the excitement of feeling by which every constitutional struggle is, of necessity, accompanied. "In the present state of the Christian world," he said, "it is impossible to deny that a test of this description leads directly to a profanation and abuse of the most holy ordinance of our religion. I have no hesitation in saying that the Test Act, which compels the clergy of our Church to administer the Holy Sacrament to persons whom by the spirit, if not by the letter, of their ministerial instructions they may be directed to repel, is a burthen upon their consciences; and I confess that I have no disposition to retain, as a political security for the Church, that which is a religious grievance to her ministers, and a scandal to her godly discipline."

These were sentiments worthy alike of a Christian Bishop and of an enlightened legislator. Not less creditable to the speaker, as well as characteristic of him by their keen practical common sense, are the following remarks, which deserve special notice, since they strikingly illustrate the view which he took of the position of the Church, and of the only true method of strengthening that position:—"Much has been said," he observed, in allusion to the arguments advanced by the advocates for the maintenance of the political ascendancy of the Church, "on the subject of bulwarks. My Lords, there is a great deal in the sound of a word. When a thing has been called a bulwark for years, people are apt to take for granted, without inquiry, that it really is so; and when once they have got the idea of bulwarks into their heads, they imagine, naturally enough, that to take away the

bulwarks must weaken or destroy the edifice. I confess, my Lords, I have no very high opinion of the serviceableness or importance of those bulwarks which it has been necessary to prop up year after year with the shoring of an Indemnity Act, lest they should fall on the heads of those whom they were intended to protect. If bulwarks they were, they were tottering bulwarks, and it was hardly worth while to maintain them; they menaced danger, rather than promised security. But, granting that they once served for the purposes of defence, I think they are no longer required. I think, my Lords, we have, within the citadel itself, abundant materials of resistance and defence, not so much against the conscientious dissenters, who stand aloof from us in minor points of difference, as against the enemies of all religion, who are endeavouring to sap and undermine the fortress of Christianity itself. I think we have within the citadel that which renders unnecessary these hornworks and counterscarps without. If your Lordships will *encourage, or, if need be, compel the engineers who are stationed on the ramparts, to do their duty*, we shall then overawe the more violent of our adversaries by the moral strength of our position, and, by and by induce the more moderate to seek for refuge and protection within the walls of that fortress which they were once confederated to beleaguer and destroy."

An apprehension having been expressed by the opponents of the Bill, lest the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts should impair the Christian character of the country, Bishop Blomfield took occasion, while expressing his opinion that such an apprehension was groundless as regarded the measure before the House, to point out another and more real source of danger which his sagacity enabled him thus early to discern. "If I was called upon to point out the quarter from which danger is really to be apprehended to the character of this country as a Christian land, I would take leave to direct your Lord-

ships' attention, not to the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, but to *an exclusive measure of a far different kind*; I mean, *the exclusion of religion from the public institutions of the country*; to the countenance and support given to *an institution for the instruction of youth, the doors of which are shut against religion under every form and modification*. My Lords, when I see a seminary of that description established, and about to be opened,—when I observe that its pretensions, as regards education, are of a high order,—that it has been founded under the most flattering and imposing auspices,—and when I find that, although set on foot for the education of youth, it excludes Christianity by name, I must confess that I am somewhat alarmed. When I see attempts daily made to depreciate the value of religion,—when I see her formally excluded from a province in which she has hitherto maintained an undisputed and legitimate pre-eminence,—when I see that it is intended to obliterate the very name of Christianity from the cycle of useful knowledge, and to withdraw the education of youth from those hands to which it has long been beneficially entrusted,—I confess I perceive some danger as likely to result to us in our character of a Christian people."

Along with these apprehensions, however, which, as the event has proved, were but too well founded, the Bishop expressed his confidence in the religious sense of the country, which he believed to be strong enough among all denominations of Christians, for a successful resistance to the attempt to divorce education from religion. Nearly thirty years have passed away since; and although the separation, the first seeds of which were then sown, has not as yet been effected, experience has certainly proved that the reliance of Bishop Blomfield on the united action of all denominations of Christians was dictated by charity rather than warranted by fact. The estimate which he formed at the time of the power of resistance inherent

in the religious convictions of the country was thus expressed:—"Sure I am that no sooner shall the first-fruits of this sort of education be evinced,—no sooner shall this device of infidelity show its front and develop its tendencies, than the whole body of sincere Christians in this country will rise in condemnation of it. I feel confident that when the danger shall be clearly visible, there will be a cordial and uncompromising cooperation of all who are attached to the Catholic Church of Christ, and especially of all who belong to that branch of it which has ever formed the stronghold of true religion, and the best security of civil liberty, in this country. They will all unite to prevent the results likely to ensue from a system of education carried on independently of religion."

With the debate on the Corporation and Test Acts the parliamentary career of Bishop Blomfield as Bishop of Chester closes; before another session came round, he had been translated to the Metropolitan See. But before we take our leave of him as Bishop of Chester, we must not omit to notice the charge,—primary and only, as his archidiaconal charge had been,—which he addressed to the clergy of the diocese of Chester in the autumn of the first year after his elevation to the Episcopate. The topics which in it he urged upon the attention of the clergy, are all of an eminently practical character, bearing upon the various duties and responsibilities of the clerical office; and special stress is laid upon the duty of strict conformity on the part of the clergy to the order prescribed by the Church for the performance of the offices of religion, as well as upon the duty incumbent upon himself to guard the order so prescribed from wilful infringement. "It has always appeared to me," the Bishop observes, in adverting to this point, "that the safest rule for one in office is, strictly to observe the *laws* which define and prescribe his duties; a rule which is no less applicable to the parochial clergy, who are to obey the laws eccle-

siastical, than to their diocesan Bishops, who are at once to obey and enforce them. It is by this maxim that I intend, with the blessing of God, to guide myself in the exercise of that authority which is entrusted to me." After dwelling on the advantages arising from a clear understanding on this subject, and pointing out the inconvenience of individual ministers following their own judgment in administering the ordinances of religion, he proceeds thus distinctly to lay down the law of the Church, binding alike upon the clergy and upon the Bishop:—

"A strict and punctual conformity to the Liturgy and Articles of our Church is a duty to which we have bound ourselves by a solemn promise, and which, while we continue in its ministry, we must scrupulously fulfil. Conformity to the Liturgy implies, of course, an exact observance of the Rubrics. We are no more at liberty to vary the mode of performing any part of public worship, than we are to preach doctrines at variance with the Articles of Religion. If there be any direction for the public service of the Church, with which a clergyman cannot conscientiously comply, he is at liberty to withdraw from her ministry; but not to violate the solemn compact which he has made with her. It is true that you are bound to promote, to the utmost of your power, the honour of God and the growth of your Saviour's kingdom: but in your ministerial capacity you have engaged to do this in a certain way, and according to certain prescribed rules. Our zeal for the interests of Christ's universal Church is to be shown by the punctual discharge of our duties, as ministers of one particular branch of it. 'It should never be forgotten by ministers,' says an able and sagacious writer, (Dr. Balguy), 'that they are subject to higher authority; that they are to execute law, not to make it. They are to embrace every opportunity of doing good, *within* the limits prescribed to them: *without* those limits they can do no good. For no accidental advantage can

stand in competition with the main end of all government, the support and establishment of settled rules.'

"This fundamental principle of our ecclesiastical polity, to which, under Providence, it has been hitherto indebted for its stability, is too much overlooked in the present day. There are many pious and excellent members of our profession, who seem to forget that the sphere and the direction of their pastoral labours are distinctly marked out by that authority which assigns to them the oversight of a particular congregation, and who regard the Christian Church at large as the object of their special concern. I think I am justified by experience in remarking, that next to carelessness on the part of the parochial clergy hardly anything is more likely to make the people undervalue the importance of uniformity in religious offices, and to smooth the way to open secession, than unauthorised deviations from the ritual of the Church, and uncalled for intrusions into the spiritual charge which has been committed by lawful authority to the keeping of others. In the sacraments, more particularly, it seems to me to be reprehensible in private clergymen to deviate from the prescribed forms, where there is no absolute necessity for such deviation; and by a capricious, a careless or a hasty mode of administering them to impair the opinion which their congregations ought to entertain, of the sanctity and importance of the ordinances themselves. Still more applicable are these remarks to the practice which I fear is too prevalent in large towns, not only of administering private Baptism without inquiring into the necessity which alone can justify it, but of using the service for public Baptism in private houses, an anomaly for which under no circumstances can an absolute necessity be pleaded.

"It is surely not too much for me to request that in performing all the different offices of public worship, and especially in administering the sacraments of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, your practice may be exactly

conformable to the Rubrics by which it ought to be guided, and to the observance of which you are bound both in law and conscience; with this proviso only, that the thing enjoined be practicable. Our obligation to observe the Canons is of a different nature, and admits of more than one kind of dispensation which is not applicable to the Rubrics. These, it must be remembered, are made binding by statute, as well as canon law; and, except where a power of dispensation is expressly reserved to the Ordinary, are *as obligatory upon HIM, as upon the officiating clergyman.*"

Little, probably, did Bishop Blomfield, when he penned these lines at the commencement of his episcopate, anticipate the difficulties which he himself would hereafter have to encounter in his endeavour to carry the sound principles enunciated in so straightforward a manner into effect. But we must not anticipate, either on this or on another point on which the language held by him in his first episcopal charge has a striking application to subsequent events. In reference to a plan,—which remains yet to be carried into execution,—for the formation of a clerical provident fund, in order to secure a regular provision for the families of deceased clergymen, as well as for clergymen incapacitated by age and infirmity for the performance of their professional duties, Bishop Blomfield remarked:—

"Not only is it greatly to be lamented that so many faithful ministers of our Church, after having toiled for years upon a pittance inferior to that which is paid to the menial servants of their wealthy neighbours, should leave their families wholly unprovided for; but it is scarcely less to be deplored, that there should be no retreat, no resource for aged clergymen, whose growing infirmities at once unfit them for the effectual discharge of their duty, and require additional comforts and reliefs; whereas not only these, but their very means of subsistence fail them,

if they relinquish the charge which is now too heavy for them to bear. It is surely a reflection on this Christian country, that while, in the various departments of civil government, the servants of the public are permitted to retire, after a stated period of service, with a competent maintenance for the remainder of their lives, no provision whatever is made for a large body of laborious and useful men, who have served their country in the most important and responsible of all vocations, that of instructing the people in their duty to God and man."

In illustration of the view which Bishop Blomfield took at this time of the position of the Church, and of her prospects for the future, the following passage from the same charge possesses more than ordinary interest: "Of one thing, my brethren, I should think we must all be persuaded: that these are not times in which either you or I can afford to lose an opportunity of serving the cause of religion and the Church. What has at all times been the duty of the Clergy, is now indispensable to their very existence, as ministers of an establishment. Many and powerful are the arguments by which we may prove our right to the attention and respect of individual Christians, and our claims upon the support and protection of the State. But they will fail to produce conviction in the minds of the greater part of mankind, if unaccompanied by the more conclusive proof of *usefulness*. In spite of all the reasons which are to be urged in behalf of our excellent Church,—the purity of her doctrines; the wisdom of her discipline; her legitimate authority; the unbroken succession and right ordination of her ministry; the excellence of her constitutions and formularies:—yet if there be a failure in activity and zeal on the part of the clergy, the *Establishment* must sink beneath them. But it will never cease to be respected and maintained, while it is *useful*; nor will it be otherwise than useful; eminently and conspicuously useful, even in a civil point of view,

while the clergy give full effect to its ordinances and means of edification, by their devotedness to the holy cause which the Church is but an instrument to uphold and promote.

“Notwithstanding all the obloquy which has been heaped upon us by the enemies of religion and social order; notwithstanding all the efforts of those uncandid adversaries who exaggerate our failings and ridicule our virtues, who scruple at no falsehood and reject no fiction, however gross and improbable, if it be likely to injure the Church through the Clergy; still there exists, I am persuaded, in the people at large, a principle of respect and attachment to the ancient and venerable institutions of the country, a great readiness to do justice to the appointed ministers of religion, if *they* will but do justice to themselves. Environed as we are by dangers of no ordinary kind, it will depend upon ourselves, under Divine Providence, to repel them. There is in the Church itself, as there is in the Gospel, of which it is a depositary and interpreter, an ample provision for the various changes and emergencies of Christian society. There is in the community at large a feeling of veneration and regard towards a religious Establishment whose solemnities and consolations have been for ages interwoven with almost all the relations and details of civil and of social life; a feeling which, if the clergy take advantage of it, may be exalted into an attachment of the firmest and the noblest kind.”

Such were the impressions and convictions, such the views and principles, which animated Bishop Blomfield, when about to enter upon that yet wider and more influential field of action, on which to follow him is the object of these pages.





CHAPTER IV.

Translation to the See of London—Growing Sense of Responsibility—Fellow feeling towards the Clergy—Parliamentary Championship of their Rights—Powers of Debate—The Roman Catholic Question—Embarrassing Position—Political and Religious Aspects of the Question—Religious Duty of a Christian Government—Ultior Objects of the Papists—Unchanged character of their Church—Anticipation of their Future Tactics—The Popish Band in the House of Commons—Illegal Assumption of Ecclesiastical Titles—Dangers of Concession—Claim of the Church to Increased Support—The “Emancipation” Act of 1829—Duty of the Bishops.

IT was on the 15th of August, 1828, that the Royal letters, authorizing the election of a new Diocesan in the room of Dr. Howley, translated to the archiepiscopal chair of Canterbury, were addressed to the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's, accompanied by the recommendation, in the usual form, that their choice should fall on Dr. Blomfield, Lord Bishop of Chester. The election took place on Wednesday, the 20th of the same month, and was confirmed on the Saturday following, at the church of St. Mary-le-Bow. But the Bishop did not formally take possession of his new See until the commencement of the following year, when, on the 16th of January, 1829, the ceremony of enthronization was performed with the usual solemnities, Dr. Copleston, Bishop of Llandaff, who then filled the deanery, installing the Bishop in his throne. He had as early as July of the preceding year, while he was as yet Bishop of Chester, been

sworn one of His Majesty's Privy Council, and taken his seat at the council board; and in December of the same year he had had the appointment of Dean of the Chapels Royal, usually annexed to the Bishopric of London, conferred upon him by the King.

We have already had occasion to note the growing sense of responsibility which accompanied the rising young clergyman through the successive stages of advancement in his profession; and from the general tone of his mind we may rest assured, that that sense was not a little deepened when he found himself, at the early age of forty-two, placed at the head of the most important, as well as the most populous diocese of the kingdom. "I should not do justice to my own feelings," is his own expression on the subject in his primary charge, "were I not, upon meeting for the first time the assembled Clergy of this important diocese, to declare before them, and in the presence of Him Who knows the secrets of the heart, the deep and trembling sense which I entertain of my own unworthiness, and of the awful responsibility of the charge to which I have been called. To say that it brings under my pastoral care and jurisdiction the most populous city of the civilized world, the metropolis of Protestant Europe, is to acknowledge that a burthen is laid upon me which no human powers nor energies, even when blessed and directed by the Spirit of light and of help, can so sustain as to answer all the desires and intentions of a mind sincerely devoted to the cause of Jesus Christ." In entering upon such a charge, it was no small advantage to him, and he felt it to be so, that his previous career had, in the inferior functions of pastoral labour, been a regular course of practical training for the office of Chief Pastor. "I may be allowed," he observed, in the same charge, "to testify the satisfaction which I feel in reflecting, that during the whole of my ministerial life, with the exception of a few years, I have been numbered

amongst the clergy of the diocese of London ; first as a curate ; then as the incumbent of a country living ; next as rector of an important parish in the metropolis ; and lastly, as an archdeacon of the diocese." And still further to mark the value which he attached to this preparation for the episcopate, he appended, in a note to his published charge, the observation made by Heylin, who, (in his life of Archbishop Laud), speaking of Archbishop Abbott's want of feeling for the poorer clergy, says, "it was *his* felicity, but *their* unhappiness, that he was never parson, vicar, nor curate ; and therefore the less careful or compassionate of their hard condition."

The fellow-feeling towards the clergy as a body, thus induced in the mind of Bishop Blomfield, was not a mere passing sentiment which rose to his lips on occasions specially calculated to call forth expressions of sympathy and good-will ; it exhibited itself in a most remarkable manner in the House of Lords, where he proved himself again and again the warm-hearted champion of the clergy, defending them in a tone of boldness unusual for one so young, both as a man and as a Member of the House, against the attacks incessantly made upon them by some of the Peers during the period of excitement caused by the debates on the Roman Catholic Emancipation Bill and the question of Parliamentary Reform. One of the animated scenes to which the Bishop's championship of the honour and the rights of the clergy gave rise, took place during the first weeks of the session following his translation to the Metropolitan See. Having entered the House while Lord Wharncliffe was discharging himself of a violent tirade against the clergy, on the ground that they were stepping out of their proper province by promoting petitions against the Roman Catholic claims, the Bishop, as soon as the Noble Lord had resumed his seat, rose with great warmth, and, after addressing to Lord Wharncliffe a severe rebuke for having "indulged in calumnies and unauthorized

slanders against a body of men who were most improperly selected as the object of the Noble Lord's attack," proceeded to vindicate the constitutional right of the clergy to lift up their voices in remonstrance against the measure then in contemplation. "Would the Noble Lord contend," the Bishop asked, "that this was an occasion on which the clergy were not justified in coming forward and expressing their sentiments? It was certain that an inroad upon the Constitution was intended, and it was equally certain that the clergy ought not to be debarred from expressing their sentiments upon such an intention. But they would be debarred if they were to be subject to these calumnies. If the conduct of the clergy at this momentous crisis were narrowly investigated, he was convinced that it would be found that they had not put their parishioners forward to petition. As far as his own experience went, he should say that they had rather restrained their parishioners. He said this on the word of the clergy themselves; and allow him to say that a clergyman had as good a right to be believed upon his word as any noble Peer in that House had. Did the Noble Lord mean to say that it was the duty of a clergyman,—that there was anything in the nature of his office, which made it imperative upon him,—to resist the desire of his parishioners to petition that House against the claims of the Roman Catholics?"

And on a subsequent occasion, during the progress of the same obnoxious bill, when Earl Somers censured the clergy on their alleged want of Christian charity, observing that if they had attended more to those parts of the Bible in which charitable doctrines were inculcated, they would not have been found in opposition to the measure, the Bishop of London thus curtly disposed of the insinuation:—"As to what a Noble Earl has said, recommending the clergy to pay more attention to the study of their Bibles, it merits no other answer than this,—which is given without

intending any discourtesy to that Noble Lord,—that he does not understand what he is saying."

Not less pointed was the reply by which the Bishop met an attack made upon the clergy as recipients of tithes, by their inveterate reviler, Lord King. "The Noble Lord has stated with truth," said the Bishop, "that repeated and vehement attacks have of late been made upon the holders of tithes. Why this sort of property should be attacked more than any other property in the land, which, as well as tithes, is possessed only by virtue of the laws, I cannot explain, unless it is because the clergy, of whom they are generally the property, are the weaker party, and that they are not so likely to stand up in defence of their property, as the aristocracy would be if their possessions or privileges were attacked. . . . I speak it with all respect to the Noble Lord, but I do not doubt that the present reverend incumbent of the parish of Ockham can produce as legal proofs of his right as the Noble Lord himself can produce in support of his claims to the land of that parish."

While the vehemence of these occasional sallies, of which the above are samples, evinces the strong *esprit de corps* with which the Bishop was imbued, identifying himself thoroughly with the clergy, the fact, that language so pointedly severe, at times barely restrained within the bounds of parliamentary *étiquette*, was submitted to by those to whom it was addressed, proves that the feeling of the House went with the young Prelate who exhibited so much spirit in defence of his order, and still more, perhaps, that the superiority of his intellectual powers was at once felt and feared.

It was not, however, on occasions like these alone, that those distinguished powers were displayed in the Senate. The first year of his London episcopate was marked by a legislative measure which called them forth

in all their fulness, and that under circumstances which on personal grounds he felt to be extremely painful, and which to one of less deeply-rooted convictions might have proved a snare. The sudden resolution for a change of policy taken by the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel on the Roman Catholic question, while it threw the whole parliamentary host which had been fighting the battles of the Constitution under their generalship into a state of consternation and confusion, might well prove a source of pain and embarrassment to a Prelate comparatively new to parliamentary tactics, who had just received at the hands of that very Government one of the most splendid pieces of ecclesiastical preferment which it was in their power to bestow. The Bishop's determination, however, was taken. He was actuated in the course which he had all along pursued upon this question, by strong and solemn convictions; and from the line of action which they indicated he was resolved, at any cost of personal feeling, not to swerve. "Entertaining as I do unchanged," he said, "those opinions which have before led me to oppose a similar measure, I can have no hesitation in saying 'Non-content' to this. I do so without hesitation; but," he added, "not without feelings of pain;—of pain at differing on such a subject from many friends whose opinions I respect, and whose friendship I highly prize; at differing from His Majesty's Government, to which, in all other respects, I look with confidence and attachment; and more especially at differing from the Noble Duke at the head of that Government, to whom personally I owe a debt of gratitude for the favourable opinion which led him to recommend me to His Majesty for an important office in the Church."

The position was certainly as curious in itself as it was distressing to the Bishop. Eminent as were the talents and other still more important qualifications which had led to Dr. Blomfield's early elevation to the episcopate, it

can scarcely admit of doubt that the vigorous and imposing character of his parliamentary eloquence was not lost sight of among the considerations which recommended him to the Prime Minister for advancement to a still higher post than that to which he had been raised in the first instance. That eloquence had been displayed by Dr. Blomfield, as occupant of the See of Chester, chiefly in combating the Roman Catholic claims. On that vital question he had proved himself a powerful auxiliary; and now that very eloquence, with all the additional weight imparted to it by the station of him who wielded it, was employed with unflinching faithfulness on the same side, but in opposition to those to whom, in consideration of those very powers, he owed that station.

In dealing with the question itself, Bishop Blomfield applied himself mainly to its political and religious aspects, as involving a great constitutional change, and serious danger to the Church. The remarks which, as Bishop of Chester, he had made on the true causes of the wretchedness and discontent of the Irish people, had proved singularly unpalatable to some of the Irish Peers, who felt themselves implicated in the vicious system of absenteeism denounced by the Bishop. To this part of the subject he thought it better, therefore, under the circumstances, not to revert, assigning as his motive for passing over what he still conceived to be an important point in the argument, his desire to avoid giving unnecessary offence. In reference to the religious considerations involved in the question, the Bishop expressed himself with extreme caution and moderation, and in a tone almost apologetic. "I cannot help saying," he observed, as if he felt that a necessity was laid upon him, as a minister of the Gospel, to testify against the proposed measure, as against an act of national sin, "that something might be urged as to the religious duty of a Christian Government. Something might be said as to the question, whether a Christian state

ought ever to make truth and error—that which it maintains as fundamental truth, and that which it condemns as dangerous error—co-ordinate powers in its government. The question is a difficult one; and I allude to it only in justice to a very large number of the most religious of our fellow-countrymen who regard the question in this point of view: in justice, more especially, to the clergy, whose studies have led them to consider the points at issue between the two Churches, not only with reference to the everlasting distinction between truth and error, but to their practical influence upon the moral and political conduct of those who embrace them. And if, in the expression of their sentiments to the Legislature, the clergy have, in some instances, though of rare occurrence, spoken with earnestness or even with somewhat of warmth,—attribute it, my Lords, to the tone and line of their inquiries, which have led them dearly to prize the truth and purity of their own Church, and highly to estimate the duty of preserving its integrity.”

A mind strongly impressed with this point which it is evident did not escape Bishop Blomfield's attention,—the responsibility of a Christian state for the maintenance of the truth, with the knowledge of which it has been blessed,—would hardly feel satisfied with this mode of urging an argument so weighty, or, rather with this apology for its being urged by others. But if on this point the Bishop did scant justice either to himself or to the cause he pleaded, it is in common fairness due to him to state, that on other points—points which he might possibly deem better suited to the assembly which he was addressing—he spoke with all his wonted energy and intellectual power. Of the objects by which the Papists, and more especially their clergy, were actuated in their clamour for “emancipation,” he took a lucid and statesmanlike view, the correctness of which the event has but too fully verified. In spite of all the asseverations put forward in support of the delusion

that Romanism in the nineteenth century was a thing wholly different from the Romanism of former ages, the Bishop of London clearly discerned both the unchanged character of the Papal Church, and the ulterior designs which, by virtue of that character, it was clear that the Romanists must have in view, however strongly they might find it expedient to disclaim them. "The Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland,"—he observed, "and in saying this I mean no reflection upon a body of men, many of whom, no doubt, are highly respectable, and all of whom, if they are conscientious, must entertain the views which I impute to them,—are looking to ulterior and more important objects; and it is no breach of charity to say, that upon every principle of human nature, and in reference to every motive by which human conduct is actuated, we are obliged to conclude that the Roman Catholic clergy will never be content till they shall either have obtained those more important objects to which the present measure is but preliminary, or shall be convinced that the attainment of them is impossible. But that conviction, my Lords, is not likely to be wrought in their minds by the issue of their present attempts; for undoubtedly success is far more likely to kindle than to extinguish the hope of future triumphs."

As to the mode of warfare which the Romish clergy were likely to adopt, the remarks of the Bishop read more like a history of what has since taken place, or a prophecy delivered after the event, than like a prognostication of what was then still in the womb of futurity. "As to the dangers," he said, "which are likely to result to the Protestant Church from the admission of Roman Catholics into Parliament, I will confess that I should entertain no very serious apprehensions from the introduction of a few Roman Catholic Peers into this House; but I do feel very serious alarm with respect to the House of Commons, where a more considerable number would probably find admis-

sion; yet not so considerable, it may be thought, as to afford any just ground of apprehension. My Lords, it is not easy to say what may be effected by the persevering efforts even of a small, but compact and united body of men, diversifying their attacks in an endless variety of methods, gaining one point after another, and succeeding in one direction after failing in another. To prove that these fears are not visionary, my Lords, I would refer your Lordships to a historical example, but that a pregnant example,—I mean the instance of that small, and at first insignificant faction, which succeeded, by dint of union and perseverance, in subverting the Church and monarchy of England. ‘For by this means,’—I quote the great historian of those times,—‘by this means it happened that a handful of men, far inferior in the beginning in numbers and interest, came to give laws to the major part; and, to show that three diligent men are really a greater number than ten unconcerned, they by plurality of voices, in the end, converted or reduced the whole body to their opinions.’ But it may be objected that there is not the least probability that the clergy will succeed in reducing the Roman Catholic members of Parliament into this compact and obedient band of auxiliaries; and as far as the aristocracy of that communion are concerned, I am not unwilling to admit the force of that objection. But, my Lords, the influence of the Roman Catholic clergy will be exercised over the members of the House of Commons through the medium of the people, who will not be suffered to elect any representatives but those who will enter cordially into their feelings of hostility towards the Protestant Church.”

Another element of danger connected with the concession about to be made to the Romanists did not escape the Bishop’s sagacious mind. When the clause of the Bill which prohibited the assumption of ecclesiastical titles by the Popish prelates was under discussion, the Earl of

Mountcashell endeavoured, though in vain, to obtain the insertion of a clause to the effect that "all persons who shall address them by these titles shall be guilty of a misdemeanour." To this provision, which, as may be supposed, was extremely unpalatable to the Romanists, it was objected, that the question of titles was altogether trifling and futile; to which the Bishop of London replied by observing that these regulations were not of so little consequence as some Noble Lords imagined: "I believe the fact to be, that each Roman Catholic bishop in Ireland, and each Roman Catholic priest in Ireland, is invested not only with spiritual authority over his diocese or parish, but also with the temporalities of his diocese or benefice; and this, too, by a regular instrument of investiture, drawn up according to the canon law. When they are asked why they do this,—why they keep up this formal assertion of their claim to the temporalities of their respective benefices? they answer, 'Because it is required by the canon law and the uniform practice of the Church; and although we have no longer any legal claim upon the temporalities, still we do not think we ought to depart from the ancient and accustomed forms of our Church.' This, my Lords, I confess, is an answer plausible enough; but my objection to the practice is, that it indicates an expectancy that they will again become possessed of the temporalities, and that the people of Ireland consider it in this light. They do expect that the time will come when their Church will be restored to the possession of its temporal endowments, as it claims the spiritual authority, in the dioceses of Ireland. It is of great importance, therefore, my Lords, that the people should be undeceived on this point; and I trust it will not go forth that His Majesty's ministers look upon the clause as nugatory, or that the Established Church considers it so, as far as the assertion of its rights is concerned. It is," the Bishop went on to say, "against this illegal assumption of titles,

as cherishing an expectation which it is the duty of the Legislature, as they value the peace of Ireland, to put down, rather than from any jealousy on the part of the Protestant hierarchy of an interference with their dignities that the clause in question is advocated."

That a concession to such opponents, or rather rivals, could not be otherwise than fraught with danger to the Established Church, was evident to all who were not blinded by the delusion, then prevalent, as to the change which, by dint of the light of the nineteenth century, had come over the spirit of Romanism. To that danger Bishop Blomfield was anything but blind; he saw it clearly before him; but he also saw that the success of the measure which he regarded with such strong and just apprehension was inevitable, and therefore, in obedience to the instinctive tendency of his mind to look to practical results, instead of wasting his breath in vain regrets on account of dangers which he was convinced could not be avoided, he made an attempt—which unhappily turned out equally fruitless—to awaken the consciences of the promoters of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill to a sense of the increased obligation which devolved upon them in consequence of this measure, to render to the Church of England every assistance, and to give her every protection, in the position of peril to which they were about to reduce her. "One other declaration," the Bishop said, "I wish to make, and it is this:—If, as appears to be almost certain, this Bill should pass into a law, it will be my duty to impress upon the clergy with whom I am connected, the duty of a cheerful acquiescence in the result of your Lordship's deliberations, and the necessity of continued and increased exertions in the cause and service of a Church whose defences this measure will go to weaken. As to the real foundations of that Church, considered as a branch of the Catholic Church of Christ, as they were not laid by the Legislature, so neither can the Legislature

remove them. Even as an establishment, while it fulfils the duties of its office as an instructress of the people I do not fear its overthrow. I believe that this measure will expose it to dangers and trials, which, however, I trust that, under the protection of Providence, it will be enabled to surmount. When the storm which has been occasioned by these discussions shall have subsided, the clergy will look with confidence to your Lordships, under increased difficulties, for that protection and support which they are entitled to expect, while they are faithful to their trust. The Church, my Lords, which is now to be deprived of one security, may justly call upon you to increase her means of doing good; to arm her with the power of internal discipline; to give her additional opportunities of fulfilling her duties, by providing the means of joining in her worship for all who desire it. If this be done, I confess that although I look forward to the certainty of perilous trials and conflicts, I do not despair of her final stability, but believe that she will survive them all."

Powerful as some of the arguments which he addressed to the House in opposition to the measure were, the Bishop appears himself to have been dissatisfied with them, and to have considered the subject as far from being exhausted. But he felt that it would be useless to insist on them any further; being well aware that all arguments were powerless to prevent the passing of the measure, and that the only purpose they could serve was that of a protest, so that Parliament and the country should not, without due warning given them of the consequences, make so serious a change in the Constitution. With this conviction on his mind, he spoke as one that was prepared to acquiesce in an inevitable result; and he assigned this expressly as the reason why he thought it better to refrain from some topics which he feared might produce an irritating effect. "Between the danger of admitting Presbyterians," he said,—in answer to those who

appealed to the Presbyterian establishment in Scotland, and to the toleration recently extended to dissenters,—“or any other Protestant sect whatever, into power, and that which will follow from the admission of the Roman Catholics, there is no comparison, no analogy at all; and that for reasons sufficiently obvious, into which, however, I am not now about to enter in detail, being desirous, in the present state of the question, of avoiding such topics as may serve to exasperate feelings which, if this Bill should pass into a law, it will be our duty to mitigate and allay. It is the probability, now amounting nearly to certainty, that such will be the issue of this debate which leads me to abstain from the discussion of many other reasons by which I am compelled to withhold even a reluctant assent from what I consider to be a fearful and hazardous experiment.”

The misgivings expressed by the opponents of the measure, the warnings addressed to Parliament and the nation against the sin it involved and the dangers with which it was fraught, were all in vain. The Bill which broke down the constitutional safeguard against the intrusion of the Papal jurisdiction and of the ecclesiastical militia of the Papacy into the kingdom, was passed by a large majority of the House of Peers, and received the reluctant assent of the King on the 13th of April, 1829; leaving those who had sufficient discernment to penetrate the designs of the Romanists, to mourn over the fatal, and in some sense judicial, blindness with which the Legislature and the country, rulers and people, were struck. Nothing now remained to be done by the Bishops of the Church, but to seek to fulfil, as best they might, the duty indicated in Bishop Blomfield's remarks,—that of endeavouring to mitigate and allay the feelings excited during the struggle, by recommending, to the clergy especially acquiescence in the law which, in an evil hour, the nation had imposed upon itself. But even this recommendation

could not, consistently with a faithful discharge of their office, be given, without being accompanied with exhortations to increased activity and vigilance against the designs of the enemy. This Bishop Blomfield felt; and in his primary charge to the clergy of the diocese of London, in the summer of the following year, he thus adverted to the subject:—"The repeal of those laws which were long considered to be indispensable to the safety of the Established Church, if it is no just cause of alarm, at least places us in a new position, compels us, for the future, to depend more entirely upon our internal resources, and will be a test of their sufficiency. Let us not, however, suppose, that the concessions which have been made to the Roman Catholics, will diminish the activity, or weaken the influence, of those who are continually on the watch for opportunities of enlarging the boundaries of their Church, and who seek to infuse into the minds of the people a doubt as to the validity of our ministerial commission."





CHAPTER V.

Spiritual condition of the Diocese of London—Desecration of the Lord's Day—Pastoral Letter on the Subject—Causes of Profanation among the Lower Orders—Ungodly Habits of the Higher Classes—Sunday Dinner Parties—Sunday Card Parties—The Gaming Houses—Importance of a Public Observance of the Lord's Day—Sanctity of the Christian Sabbath—Sensation Caused by the Pastoral—Resentment of the Public Press—The "Times," The "John Bull"—The "Morning Post"—Reaction in the Public Mind—Salutary Efforts of the Pastoral—The Uses of Unpopularity.

NO the task of strengthening the Church by increasing her internal efficiency, it had from the first been Bishop Blomfield's determination to apply himself; and he lost no time in making himself acquainted with the condition and the spiritual wants of his diocese; an indispensable preliminary to useful action, which, in his case, was greatly facilitated by his previous connexion with the diocese, and by the knowledge which, as the chaplain of his predecessor and patron, Dr. Howley, he had already had ample opportunity of acquiring. Among the obstacles which presented themselves to his mind, as calculated seriously to obstruct whatever measures might be devised for the spiritual improvement of the population under his charge, the all but universal neglect of the Lord's Day occupied a prominent place; and with a view to check this evil, as far as lay in his power, he addressed, in May 1830, to the inhabitants of London and Westminster "A letter on the present neglect of the Lord's Day."

Of the considerations which induced him to take this somewhat unusual, though not altogether unprecedented,* step, he himself gave the following account:—"When an evil of great and crying magnitude threatens the well-being of religion amongst us, and that evil is most conspicuous and formidable in this metropolis; when the number of the parochial clergy, whose special duty it is to watch and to oppose its progress, is notoriously and lamentably inadequate to the extent of the province entrusted to them; and when the nature of the evil is such as to require a speedy, a zealous, and a general resistance on the part of all sincere Christians; it seems to me that I cannot justly be accused of forwardness, if I raise the voice of authority in the cause of God and of His Gospel; especially when it is considered that the more unusual such a warning is, the more likely it is to meet with attention. The evil of which I speak, is the profanation of the Christian Sabbath; an evil which has often been noticed and deplored by good and pious men at different times within the last hundred years, but which now bids defiance to remonstrance and authority, and seems to threaten the destruction of all religious habits in the lower classes of society."

While thus pointing out the religious condition of the masses as the great object of his pastoral solicitude, the Bishop took care to have it clearly understood, that it was not so much to them as to their superiors in rank and station that his remonstrance was addressed. The lower orders would probably not even obtain cognizance, except through indirect channels, of the fact of his having lifted up his voice against the profanation of the Lord's Day; and they might be left more properly to be remonstrated with by the ministers of their several parishes. But there was

* Bishop Porteus had issued a Pastoral on the profanation of the Lord's Day; but his was addressed to the Clergy, and not, as that of Bishop Blomfield, to the Laity.

another class of offenders, whom the voice of the parochial clergy might either not reach at all, or, if it reached them, might fail to affect powerfully,—whom his voice was sure to reach, and with whom he might reasonably hope that it would have some weight; it was for them that his remonstrance was principally intended; for “those,” as he himself described them, “who, when they might powerfully assist and strengthen the resistance made by the clergy to the overflowings of ungodliness, by a proper use of the worldly advantages which God had given them, did all in their power to render it ineffectual, by their carelessness, their indifference, their evil example.” It was, in fact, at the ungodly habits of the higher classes, their Sunday convivialities and Sunday diversions, entailing labour and secularity upon all around them, and putting the stamp of desecration publicly and conspicuously upon the Lord’s Day, that the Bishop’s pastoral was chiefly aimed. In his enumeration of the offences against the decent observance of the day, of which he complained, he commenced with those in which the lower orders were concerned, such as the traffic carried on during the greater part of the day in all the different articles of food; the resort of the lower orders to the almost numberless wine-vaults and gin-shops; the gathering together in the outskirts of London, and in the neighbourhood of the parks, of youthful profligates of both sexes, for the purpose of fighting, pigeon-shooting, gambling, and all kinds of improper practices; the conveyance, by short stages and steam-packets, of crowds of Sabbath-breakers to more distant scenes of festivity and revelry; the Sunday news-rooms, appropriately designated as “a sort of moral dram-shops, where doses of the most deleterious poison are imbibed by thousands of persons who ought to be engaged in reading or hearing the Word of God.”

Having drawn a striking picture of these and similar causes of Sabbath desecration among the lower orders, the

Bishop passed on to the sins of the higher classes, on which he commented in a tone of great, though not unjust, severity. After adverting to the evil effects which, while in the charge of the parish of Chesterford, he had himself experienced, of the practice of Sunday travelling, more especially to Newmarket on Easter-day, he animadverted on the custom, much more prevalent then than it is now, of Sunday dinner parties, by the preparations for which numbers of persons were unavoidably detained from the performance of their Sabbath duties, and deprived of their Sabbath rest. Independently, however, of this argument in proof of the impropriety of these Sunday convivialities, he called attention to the effect which they were likely to produce upon the spiritual condition of the persons themselves who gave or partook of those entertainments. They, he observed, "would do well to consider the inconsistency of devoting any portion of a day set apart for religious purposes to conviviality and festivity, not to say excess and intemperance; and how far the effects produced upon their own consciences by the religious exercises of the day, (if they have joined in any such), are likely to be heightened and improved, or diluted and effaced, by the luxurious indulgence of the evening.

. . . . What is true of the anxiety and perturbations excited by gaming, is, to a certain degree, true of that dissipation of thought, that trifling conversation, that gratification of the appetite, which, if they be not the objects, are certainly the accompaniments of these social entertainments on the Lord's Day; 'they are inconsistent with the tranquillity and frame of temper in which the duties and thoughts of religion should always both find and leave us.' Assuredly they can in no sense be considered as a part of the appropriate work of that day which is appointed for the glory of God. They have no connexion, even the most casual and indirect, with religion. At many, if not at most, of these Sunday dinner parties, I suspect that

the decent and reverent custom of returning thanks to the Giver of all good gifts before and after meat, is altogether omitted; an ungodly habit into which the higher classes of society seem to be generally passing: 'The harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of His hands.'

Next to Sunday dinner parties, the Bishop went on to censure, in terms still more stringent, Sunday card parties, the givers and frequenters of which, he feared, were "beyond the reach of his admonitions;" and from thence he took occasion to reprobate "the scandalous and shameless manner in which the gaming-houses,—those dens of infamy, those monuments of splendid profligacy,—were resorted to on the Christian Sabbath." Though less objectionable in some respects, yet as being, on the score of desecration of the Lord's Day, equally censurable, the Sunday evening *conversazioni*, and Sunday amusements of all kinds, such as "a drive round the park, generally during the time of the afternoon service," concerts, and the like, came in for their share of animadversion, in the course of which the Bishop pointedly observed that "those persons who pleaded most loudly for what they designated as 'innocent recreations' on the Lord's Day, were for the most part the very persons who might be thought least to require amusement; not the poor labourer, mechanic, or little tradesman; but the votaries of fashion, the wealthy, and the gay; those who had been engaged in the pursuit of pleasure during the whole of the week, and who, for that very reason, required, if they understood their own state, a total cessation from it on the Lord's Day."

Whilst arguing in detail, and in reference to individuals, on the practical working of these several kinds of sabbath desecration, the Bishop did not lose sight of the national aspect of the question, as involving the ren-

dering of due honour or the doing of dishonour to God, and the consequent prospect of national blessing or national punishment. On the contrary, he put this point in the forefront of his argument:—"I will not go so far as to say that the strict observance of the Lord's Day is in all cases a just criterion of the religious state of a Christian nation, (although if the *private* observance of it correspond with the public demonstrations of piety, I should think it no doubtful test); but this I may safely say, that the neglect and profanation of that day is an unquestionable indication of the *want* of national piety; and if the Word of God, and the past experience of His providential government do not deceive us, the want of national piety will surely be followed by the gradual decay of national prosperity, if not by some sudden visitation of calamity. It is a truth as certain as it is little remembered, that 'righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.'"

The letter concludes with the following forcible appeal:—"I am no advocate for a Pharisaical observance of the Christian Sabbath; nor would I interfere with those quiet recreations which different individuals may think fit to allow themselves, provided that no offence be committed against public decorum, nor any shock given to that public opinion of the sanctity of the Lord's Day, which is a chief security for the continuance of religion amongst us. It is principally with a view to that opinion that I would impress upon the higher classes the importance of an exemplary observance of the day; although it may well be urged upon them with reference to their own interests, as accountable, dying sinners. What it is lawful for one Christian to do upon the Lord's Day, may not be lawful for another, with reference to its effects upon his own religious state, or upon that of others. Whatsoever is injurious to either, is unlawful; whatsoever does not tend to promote either, is unprofitable. And if every person

who pretends to any religion, would fairly put it to his conscience and reason, what kind of employment on the Sunday would be really most conducive to his own improvement, and to the honour of religion, he would need no casuist to resolve him what might or might not be done upon the Lord's Day. At all events, the evil which is to be apprehended at the present moment, is not a puritanical strictness of observance, which may be the occasion of hypocrisy, but a laxity fast verging to a total neglect. And were it otherwise, superstition in an ordinance of this kind is no very terrible thing; whereas irreligion is unspeakably mischievous. In spite of the increased number of our churches, in spite of the increased exertions of a zealous and laborious clergy, religion is, we fear, on the wane amongst the poorer classes; and the surest and the most alarming symptom of this is the profanation of the Sabbath. Surely, then, I am justified in calling with great earnestness of intreaty upon those who have it in their power, (I do it in the name of the clergy and of all well-wishers in the cause of true religion), to assist us in stemming the torrent of ungodliness; and to make by their conduct a practical declaration of their pious resolution, 'as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.' "

So pointed and so bold an interference with the customs of society, with the habits of the rich and the great, on the part of a man in the position of the Bishop of London, and of Bishop Blomfield's character and reputation, was not likely to fall dead upon the public ear. The appearance of the letter created an immense sensation. It was canvassed in every society, and, as a matter of course, at those very Sunday parties against which some of its rebukes were directed; nor does it require any gift of divination to imagine the style of comment to which it would be subjected at the convivial gatherings of the witty and the gay. There is no reason to doubt that there was truth in the assertion made by a public writer who had

personal opportunities of knowing the fact, that "in all places where he had heard his Lordship's pamphlet discussed, the effect produced by it had been completely the reverse of that which his Lordship meant it to have."

Nor was this all. In remonstrating with the higher classes on the pernicious effect of their example, the Bishop had reminded them that their actions, even in their own domiciles, were never really private. "The Athenian curiosity of the present age," he had observed, "to which the public press is the pander, renders it almost impossible that any transactions of those who occupy the vantage ground of life should be concealed from those beneath them. Their habits of living, their domestic arrangements, their conversation, the petty details of their private life, find their way,—generally, indeed, distorted and misrepresented,—into the newspapers: and while many of their pious and charitable deeds pass unnoticed, no violation of decency or propriety can escape publicity. Every Sunday dinner-party or concert is made known, on the following day, to every corner of the metropolis, and scandalizes or encourages thousands." The meaning of this was obvious enough, and scarcely needed the explanation given in a note appended to this passage in a second edition of the letter,—which was immediately called for,—that it was not the writer's intention to charge the press with having "*advocated or defended* the profanation of the Lord's Day, however it might, indirectly and undesignedly perhaps, have *contributed* to it in various ways." However simple, however accordant with fact, the Bishop's statement was, it involved an impeachment of the functions of the press, which, together with the reference made in the letter to the publication of Sunday newspapers, and to the notoriously licentious and irreligious character of some of them, constituted a crime far more heinous in the present age than that of *lèse-majesté*, the crime of high-treason against "the fourth estate."

The consequence was, that a storm of indignation and abuse burst over the Bishop's devoted head. First and foremost among the assailants was the leading morning journal, which, after largely taking credit to itself for having acted the part of *magister morum* to the public on this subject long before the Bishop had undertaken the office, vented its spleen by a reference to Johnson's Dictionary as to the meaning of the word "pander," and gravely stated its intention to "consider with some of its brethren, whether it might not be thought advisable to adopt some other mode of repelling the odious charge and setting themselves right with the public." It is needless to say that this threat proved a *brutum fulmen*; the editor having, probably, before he summoned his colleagues to a council of war against the offending prelate, discovered the absurdity of an action for libel by the press collectively, against the Bishop of the metropolis, for having accused it of pandering to the curiosity of the public. The weekly journal of the high Tory party, which was at that time published on Sundays,—after pleasantly turning the edge of the Bishop's reproof by the observation, that "the Bishop expressed a proper dislike of the publication of *twelve* Sunday newspapers," adding, "we ourselves should be better pleased if there were but *one*"—proceeded to inquire whether "the air of St. James's-square had been infected with the taint of puritanism, and the Bishop of London had caught the disease from his opposite neighbour;" and even hinted at the danger of extensive secession from the Church, apparently to Rome, as the result of a pamphlet "savouring considerably of that disposition to gloom and puritanism which first disgust, and then drive from the pale of the Church of England, those who have always held the belief that the Protestant religion has nothing of austerity in its composition."

The most ridiculous, however, of the exhibitions of

journalist wrath provoked by Bishop Blomfield's letter, was that made by the daily morning organ of the fashionable world. Deeply wounded, not only in its literary *amour propre*, but in its "flunkeyism," by the attack made by the Bishop upon those fashionable movements and festivities of hebdomadal recurrence, to the announcement and description of which its columns were devoted with such indefatigable obsequiousness, that journal could not persuade itself of the reality of so sacrilegious an onslaught upon all that it held sacred. Accordingly it accompanied its notice of the publication of the Bishop's letter with the sage conclusion, that "a production so utterly unworthy of so able and pious a Divine must be an audacious forgery, and a wanton libel upon one of the brightest ornaments of our pure and heavenly Church." Within two days, however,—the editor having probably received a hint from some "influential" quarter, that this was not exactly the way to fight the battle of the aristocracy, and of their Sunday pastimes,—the same journal gracefully wheeled round, and made the *amende honorable* to the Bishop by expressing its conviction, that "his letter to the inhabitants of the metropolis was a production which denoted great earnestness and a very considerable zeal on the part of the Right Reverend Prelate in the cause of religion." Nay, it went the length of vindicating "some particular passages" in it, which "might be thought to breathe a spirit somewhat too unaccommodating to the actual condition and exigencies of society," and were, therefore, "likely to injure in some degree its usefulness and efficacy as a pastoral admonition," by observing that "a Christian prelate is not at liberty to frame for himself, or to exhibit to others, any standard of morality inferior to that which he finds in those sacred records of which he is the appointed and authorized expositor, but which neither he nor any other human being is warranted to criticise, mitigate, or curtail." The article then proceeded to give an

abstract of the Bishop's letter, transcribing some of the more stringent passages in it, as "specimens of a work upon which one or two unguarded expressions had drawn down a weight and severity of critical reprehension that the reader must already see was wholly unmerited." In conclusion, the writer, "after an attentive perusal" of the Bishop's letter, pronounced it to be "highly honorable as a whole to the zeal and talents of its eminent author, and well calculated to promote the object which evidently lay nearest to his heart, 'the maintenance of true religion and virtue.'"

From whatever quarter the inspiration of these "second thoughts" may have come, and however ludicrous the contrast between them and the pious horror and unbelief excited by the "audacity" of so unfashionable a publication, there can be no doubt that this recantation accurately represented what, upon calmer reflection, was the verdict of the thinking and right-feeling part of the community, and even of many of those who, on the first blush of the excitement produced by it, were tempted to treat it with profane ridicule or with pompous indignation. The greater decency in the public observance of the Lord's Day, and especially the more general regard paid to its proprieties by the upper classes of society, at present, as compared with the time at which Bishop Blomfield issued his remonstrance, furnish abundant evidence that the admonition was not fruitless. The effect was not, indeed, instantaneous; and it might have been still more tardy, had not a severe visitation of Divine Providence supervened to give weight to the words of the messenger of the Lord of Hosts. Nor is, even at this time, the observance of the Lord's Day in the metropolis and its suburbs such as to satisfy the requirements of Holy Writ, or the rule of action on this subject which commends itself to the Christian mind. But if it be considered how vast an amount of additional temptation has since been thrown in

the way of the population, and what determined efforts have been made by men in power to obtain a legislative, and at all events to give an official, sanction to the desecration of the Lord's Day, the conclusion is inevitable, that the failure of these efforts, and the comparatively limited effect of those temptations, is, under the Divine blessing, attributable to that fuller appreciation of the sanctity of the day, which the bold assertion of it by Bishop Blomfield at the commencement of his London episcopate was so eminently calculated to produce. The manner in which that assertion was met in the first instance, while it is highly characteristic of the spirit of the times in which he felt himself called upon to lift up his voice for the honour of God's Holy Name, might well serve to initiate Bishop Blomfield, whose career had hitherto been marked by success and popularity, in that difficult lesson which every one who is to act the part of "a good soldier of Jesus Christ," sooner or later must learn and cannot learn too soon,—the lesson, namely, that the endurance of "hardness" is inseparable from the conscientious performance of his duties; and that, not approbation and applause, but obloquy, hostility, and persecution are this world's recompense for faithfulness in the service of Christ. Viewed in this light, the storm of unpopularity which the "Letter on the neglect of the Lord's Day" called forth, was a slight and, doubtless, a useful prelude to much more severe lessons of the same description which were in store for Bishop Blomfield at no very distant day.





CHAPTER VI.

Illness and Death of King George IV.—Accession of William IV.—Bishop Blomfield's Sermon in the Chapel Royal—Spiritual Counsels to the New Monarch—The Temptations of an Exalted Station—Need of Sacramental Communion with Christ—Primary Visitation of the Diocese—The Bishop's Charge—"Signs of the Times"—Spirit of Infidelity—Diffusion of Knowledge—Duty of the Clergy—Adherence to the Rules and Ordinances of the Church—Residence—Private Baptism—Private Churchings—Registration—Clerical Agency Offices—Parochial Schools—Public Catechising—Preparation for Confirmation—Introduction of a Sunday Evening Service—Week-day Services—Daily Matins—Visiting Associations—Qualifications for Holy Orders—Necessity of a Higher Standard—Theological Seminaries—The Bishop's Programme of Requirements.

BEFORE the excitement caused by Bishop Blomfield's Pastoral had had time to subside, public attention was diverted from it, and the talk of the town pre-occupied, by a far more engrossing topic—the illness of the King, the symptoms of which soon assumed an alarming character, and pointed, as to its probable issue, to the event which, in the month following the publication of the Bishop's Letter, caused a vacancy on the throne. Early on the morning of Saturday, the 26th of June, 1830, King George IV. expired at Windsor Castle; the morning of Sunday, the 27th, dawned upon a new reign, and on the following Sunday, July the 4th, the Prince who had succeeded to the throne, presented himself at the altar of the Chapel Royal, Whitehall, to join in the highest act of

worship known to the Christian Church ; Bishop Blomfield, as Dean of the Chapels Royal, being the officiating minister, and the preacher of the day. The occasion was one of deep interest—one which, to a Christian mind, could not appear otherwise than fraught with important consequences for the future, whether regard were had to the circumstances of the times, or to the character of the man called upon to sustain the weight of England's crown. By giving, or rather suffering to be given, nearly at the close of his reign, the Royal Assent to the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, the departed Monarch had permitted an opening to be made in the sluices of the Constitution, through which the rising tide of change was already beginning to rush with a current, the force and direction of which it was impossible to calculate. His successor had, while a subject, expressed opinions, and exhibited sympathies, which inspired the movement party with the most sanguine expectations ; and neither his abilities nor his personal temper and character, seemed to be equal to the difficult part which it was easy to foresee he would have to play, as the wearer and guardian of the crown, in the face of powerful democratic tendencies, manifested both in Parliament and in the nation at large. That Bishop Blomfield fully appreciated the nature of the crisis, and the character of the man who was to encounter it, is evident from the sermon preached by him on the occasion, and subsequently published by the King's command. Nothing could be either more forcible or more delicate, than the language in which he directed the mind of the new Monarch to the heavy weight of responsibility attaching to his office, and to the only source from which he could hope to derive true strength for the fulfilment of its arduous duties. Taking his text from 1 Cor. x. 16 ; “ The Cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ ? the Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ ? ”—the Bishop, after dwelling in general terms

upon the nature and the blessed effects of the ordinance to which those words have reference, thus passed on to the train of thought which, on so remarkable an occasion it was fitting that the preacher should suggest :—

“ There is no diversity of religious character, which can render unnecessary a sacramental communion with Him who is the light and the life of the world. It is alike indispensable for growth in grace and for confirmation in godliness; for him who is but just awakened to the great interests of his soul, and for him who walks in the meridian light of Christian knowledge, and in the matured strength of Christian motives and hopes. Neither is there any difference of external circumstances which can diminish the importance of a constant and persevering application to the source of spiritual wisdom and power, through the appointed means of access, His written Word, the ordinances of His Church, the teaching of His commissioned messengers, the secret outpourings of a devout spirit, but especially the Cup of blessing, and the consecrated Bread, the Communion of the Blood and of the Body of Christ.

“ If it be a truth full of graciousness and of consolation, that ‘ the Spirit helpeth our infirmities,’ who is there, in this state of imperfection and of trial, that is not in extreme and urgent need of that assistance? Who is there that could render an account of services proportioned to his means, of works worthy of his vocation, of a life conformable to his knowledge, of self-denial, patient endurance, active benevolence, adequate to the suggestions even of his own conscience, or, if that be silent, to the plain and uncompromising requirements of the revealed will of God?

“ If the poor and humble members of the family of Christ desire the help of the Spirit, to enlighten and sanctify and console them, in order that, amidst all the discouragements of their hard condition, they may turn to

good account the single talent entrusted to their care; surely the rich, and the mighty, and the learned may not disdain the aid of Him who alone can enable them rightly to appreciate the value of things temporal, compared with things eternal; who alone can repress the risings of an ambitious spirit, convince them of the vanity of earthly grandeur, and of the insufficiency of this world's wisdom, and yet teach them the awful responsibilities which rest upon those to whom these talents are given in charge. In exact proportion to the number and strength of those ties, (and with whom are they not too numerous and too strong) which bind our affections to this world, and interrupt the steadiness of our progress towards a better, should be our anxiety to profit by all the memorials and aids in which the beneficent author of religion has made provision for its continuance, for its appliance to the understandings and consciences of men, and for its revival in the forgetful heart.

“‘If a man abide not in me,’ said our blessed Lord, ‘he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered;’ but how can they whom the world endeavours to persuade, by a thousand pressing arguments and ingenious devices, to make it their abiding place, the place of their repose, their trust, their desire, how, I ask, can *they* be effectually strengthened to resist it, and to adhere to, and abide in Him who has called them out of it, but by the most sincere and continued efforts and strainings towards Him through the Spirit? To them, surely, it is of unspeakable importance that they should from time to time solemnly renew their oath of allegiance to the King of kings and Lord of lords, and be united to Him by visible symbols; that they should offer, in the faithful use of them, a solemn pleading for pardon, and receive His own pledge of their sanctification; that they should oblige themselves by that solemn act, to enter upon a life of holiness and charity, and to copy His example, in devoting themselves to the good of mankind.

Compared with the richness of that consolation which a sincere and devout mind will experience in the performance of such an act of worship, and compared with the conscious dignity of a soul thus taken into communion with its Saviour, the pleasures, the riches, the honours of this world, fade into insignificance and worthlessness.

“But they alone can experience the fulness of this joy with whom the more solemn acts of devotion are but the marked and emphatic expressions of their habitual feelings; who, if they then seek for supplies of grace with more earnest and importunate entreaty, do so in order that it may regulate and sanctify the tenor of their daily life, and be their direction and support in the discharge of those duties which, when they are lightest, require the effectual aid of the Spirit, and when they are weightiest and most arduous, can never be too weighty nor too arduous for him who knows that all his sufficiency is of God. His strength is made perfect in our weakness; we can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us.”

That these counsels of heavenly wisdom sank deeply into the royal mind, and were not without their influence upon the reign inaugurated by such faithful personal advice to the Monarch, may assuredly be inferred, not merely from the King's command that the sermon should be printed, but from his conduct upon more than one occasion during the course of his reign, when the friends of religion and social order found in William IV. a more strenuous and warm-hearted supporter, and the advocates of change a more resolute opponent, than either party had anticipated.

Fresh from the impressive scene in which he himself had taken so conspicuous a part, Bishop Blomfield proceeded to meet the clergy of his diocese at his Primary Visitation. He did so with the full consciousness that, owing to the complexion of the times, his Episcopate would prove an arduous one. “It can scarcely be necessary,” he observed, in the introductory portion of his Charge,

"for me to remind you that I have been called to my present station at a season of no ordinary difficulty, whether we regard the interests of the Christian Church at large, or the welfare of that branch of it which is planted in this kingdom. The signs of the times are surely such as to indicate to him who attentively observes the movements of God's providence, the approach, if not the arrival, of a period pregnant with important consequences to the cause of religion."

Having glanced, in a passage which we have already quoted, at the probable effects of the admission of Romanists to political power, and expressed a charitable persuasion,—which in his next charge he was constrained to acknowledge, had proved illusory,—that on the part of the Protestant dissenters a more friendly feeling was entertained towards the Church, the Bishop signalized in the following memorable words, what he conceived to be the chief source of danger to the Church and the nation :—
 "The spirit of infidelity,—which at the close of the last century unhinged the frame of society, and overturned the altars of God in a neighbouring kingdom, but was repressed and shamed, and put to silence by the Christian energies of this country,—is again rearing its head ; and the truths of the Gospel are denied, and its doctrines derided, and its blessed Author is reviled and blasphemed, by men whom the force of human laws has been found insufficient to restrain. And if it be said that these are few in number, and insignificant in point of talent and learning,* there is a more numerous class amongst us who look upon religion merely as a necessary part of every system of

* The allusion is evidently to the wretched displays of coarse blasphemy made at this time in London by a renegade clergyman, who styled himself "The Devil's Chaplain," and by his coadjutor, the infidel publisher in Fleet Street, in whose windows religion was assailed in the most revolting manner not only by publications, but by prints, pictures, and wax figures.

government; who would introduce the principles of a miserable political economy into its institutions and ministry; and who take no personal interest in its consolations or its ordinances: and there is also a powerful and active body of men who are attempting to lay other foundations of the social virtues and duties than those which are everlastingly laid in the Gospel, and to propose other sanctions, and other rules of conduct, and other rewards, than those which are proposed in the Word of Revelation."

It is impossible to read this delineation of the nature of the danger which was then beginning to threaten the Church and the cause of true religion, and to compare with it the developments of the spirit so portrayed, with which, during the quarter of a century which has since elapsed, the Church has had to contend, without being struck with the discernment of the signs of the times exhibited by the Bishop. How to deal with that spirit, how to encounter its assaults, was the question which at that time evidently occupied his mind. The result of his reflections he thus imparted to the clergy of his diocese and to the world at large:—

"The almost universal diffusion of elementary knowledge furnishes the enemies of Revealed Religion with abundant materials to work upon: but then it also furnishes the friends of truth with the obvious means of counteracting the influence of erroneous doctrines, and of instilling sounder principles into the bulk of the community. Any attempt to suppress, or even to check, the spirit of inquiry which is abroad in the world, would not only be a vain and fruitless attempt, but a violation of the indefeasible liberty of the human mind, and an interference with its natural constitution. To impart to that spirit a right direction, to sanctify it with holy motives, to temper it to righteous purposes, to shape it to ends which lie beyond the limits of this beginning of our existence, will be the endeavour

of those who desire to make the cultivation of intellect conducive to moral improvement, and to establish the kingdom of Christ at once in the understandings and affections of mankind."

That the task of effecting this, and thereby, with the only really efficient weapons, making war upon the rising spirit of infidelity, devolved primarily upon the ministers of religion, was an obvious deduction to be drawn from these premises. "I need not undertake to prove," the Bishop continued, "that it is pre-eminently the duty of the clergy to watch the tendency and progress of this irresistible spirit; to avail themselves of its opportunities, and to provide against its dangers; to keep pace themselves with the intellectual advancement of the age, and to use the facilities which it affords them for the dissemination of Christian principles." And in practical application of this general rule of duty to the particular obligations of the clergy individually, he added:—"I do not mean to assert that every individual clergyman is to be looking out from his watch-tower to observe the workings of that leaven which is surely, and not slowly, leavening the whole mass; nor that he is to be occupying himself with schemes for the preservation of religious unity, or of social order; but that all, in their respective departments, are to be labouring with increased assiduity in the discharge of their appointed duties; profiting by the helps which are to be derived from the improved state of human knowledge, and the improved mechanism of education; and feeling all the additional weight of obligation laid upon them by the peculiar circumstances of the times, to be more than ever zealous and diligent and devoted to their work. Not that any change of times or circumstances can vary the essential sacredness of ministerial obligation, nor heighten the motives which are implied in that emphatic charge of the Chief Shepherd, 'Feed my sheep.' Yet a diversity of places, or seasons, may render necessary different degrees of exertion

and endurance in the ministers of Christ, for the accomplishment of those great ends which all ought to have in view; and as it is a chief part of ministerial prudence to understand the nature and extent of those requirements which their peculiar situation lays upon them, so it is the proof of ministerial faithfulness in no case to fall short of those requirements, but rather to go beyond them, and to 'be always abounding in the work of the Lord.'"

From this general survey of the work which, according to the special exigencies of the times, the Church had then before her, the Bishop passed on to the consideration of the advantages afforded for this work by the organization of an established Church, which assigned to each individual clergyman his particular sphere of duty, and prescribed to him definite rules to be followed in the edification of the Church. In reference to this point, "the manner and degree in which the Clergy are bound to execute the duties of their charge, according to the rules and ordinances of the Church to which they belong," Bishop Blomfield furnished his Clergy with the following programme—so to speak—of his episcopal administration:—"With respect to your own practice, it is of greater importance to you to be made acquainted with my opinion upon these points, than to understand my sentiments upon the nature and obligation of our ministerial calling in general: for in enforcing the latter, I have no influence over you, but that which proceeds from respect to my office or person; whereas in requiring attention to the duties prescribed by the Church, I am not only empowered, but solemnly charged, to exercise authority, where authority is necessary. And here allow me to express a hope, and I express it with a degree of confidence fully justified by past experience, that although I now mention the word 'authority,' my future intercourse with you may be principally that of suggestion and advice. Considering the peculiar circumstances of this diocese, and that diversity of opinion upon many

points of expediency and propriety which must be expected to prevail amongst men of education and experience, and independent minds, it can only be on very clear and unquestionable points of duty that I shall think it necessary to go beyond a plain and decided statement of my opinion, or an earnest expression of my wishes. If upon some occasions that opinion may appear to you too decided, or the expression of my wishes too earnest, you will, I trust, ascribe it to the sincerity of my own convictions, and not suspect me of being deficient in feelings of sincere respect and affection for my brethren. From any failure in this particular I am secured, not only by my long acquaintance with the clergy of this diocese, but by my own experience of the difficulties which they have to encounter, and of the need in which they stand of every encouragement and assistance. Conscious as I am of my own infirmities, I think I can promise for myself, that if you find me a plain-spoken and candid monitor, and an uncompromising assertor of what I esteem the sacred principles of clerical duty, you will also find me accessible to reason, and thankful for advice, and heartily disposed to favour and assist the labours of those who are doing the work of evangelists."

As regards the points on which, in the administration of his diocese, he meant to lay particular stress, he specified—residence, which he announced his intention of enforcing in all cases where it was practicable, and in connexion with the subject, adverted to the evil of pluralities;—the practices of baptizing, and even of churching women, in private houses, the former of which he expressed a hope to see gradually abandoned, whilst he requested the immediate discontinuance of the latter;—the duty of careful attention to the registration of baptisms by the clergyman himself;—the requirement of a license from the bishop before statedly officiating in the diocese, a point on which he intimated his determination to insist with great strict-

ness, and took occasion "particularly to warn the clergy against having recourse to those irregular and disreputable sources of information and supply, called Clerical Agency or Register Offices;"*—the importance of parochial schools for the children of the poorer classes, including infant schools in his recommendation;—the no less important duty, not to be superseded by the clergyman's superintendence of the schools, of public catechizing in the Church;—and the duty of careful preparation of candidates for confirmation, whose age, as a rule, he fixed at sixteen. He further expressed his opinion that the introduction of a third service in the evening might, in populous town parishes, be found useful and desirable; and in recommending the continuance of the weekly services on Wednesdays and Fridays, even though but thinly attended, he suggested "whether it might not, in some cases, be worth trying the experiment of substituting for them early prayers, or matins, which some classes of tradesmen, mechanics, and servants, might attend, before they commence the business of the day. This practice," the Bishop added, "which was once general, is still retained in some of our cathedral churches, where these early services are attended by a considerable number of persons. For my own part, I should be glad to see the experiment tried, not on Wednesdays and Fridays only, (upon which days the Litany might still be used at 11 o'clock), but

* In these days of greater strictness and propriety it sounds fabulous, but it is a fact, nevertheless, that there was an office in the metropolis in which the services of a clergyman might be procured upon the shortest notice, according to the following tariff—"A stick," seven and six-pence; "a rouser," half-a-guinea. Well might the Bishop state that the "deputy" so "furnished upon payment of a certain fee" was "in too many cases, such a person as ought not to be admitted into the pulpit;" giving at the same time due warning that "he should not willingly admit into his diocese as curate, any person who owed his introduction to such a quarter, nor be well pleased with those who employed him."

on every day except Sunday, agreeably to the practice of the early Church, and of our own in its better ages." In furtherance of the parochial work, the Bishop pointed out the great assistance to be derived in populous parishes from parochial visiting associations, but with a "caution against relinquishing the superintendence and direction of these auxiliary labourers, and against delegating to them their own peculiar functions and duties, as the commissioned interpreters of Scripture, as the Lord's remembrancers for His people, and as the appointed guides of their devotion. There is," he observed, "a special promise of blessing annexed to ministerial service; and the sense of that specialty ought not to be effaced from the minds of our flocks by the permitted intrusion of laymen, however pious and zealous, into that which belongs to our own peculiar office. If this be not attended to, you must expect that tares will spring up in the wheat, and that your visiting societies will become so many nurseries of schism."

On one more point the Bishop dwelt with great emphasis in this his primary charge to the clergy of the diocese of London,—the standard of qualification which it was his intention to apply to candidates for holy orders. His views on this subject, and the rules which he laid down for his own guidance in the discharge of that part of his office, call for a more extended notice in this place, not only on account of their intrinsic importance, but because the example so set by Bishop Blomfield had no small share in raising the general character of the clerical profession.

"It was made," the Bishop began by observing, "a subject of complaint against the English Church, soon after its reformation, that unlearned men were admitted into its ministry; and the fact, to a certain extent, was acknowledged by Hooker, and excused on the ground of necessity. The inadequate supply of scholars from the university, and the insufficiency of livings with cure, were

such, that there was 'no remedy but to take into the ecclesiastical order a number of men meanly qualified in respect of learning;' and this was of less consequence in an age when the people in general were extremely ignorant and illiterate, and the most elementary and most homely kind of instruction was sufficient for them. But the liberty of preaching was then restricted to clergymen of a higher degree of learning,—a restriction which plainly indicated the opinion of those wise and prudent men who governed our reformed Church in its state of transition, that for the task of 'rightly dividing the word of truth,' something more was required than honest intentions, and the simplest rudiments of knowledge. The circumstances of the Church are now widely different. At that period the demand for labourers in the vineyard greatly exceeded the supply: but now the number of candidates far exceeds the demand. The general diffusion of knowledge, even of scriptural knowledge of a certain kind, amongst the lower orders, and the more varied and refined education of the higher, render it absolutely necessary for him who is to speak to them 'as one having authority,' and to labour amongst them as 'a workman that needeth not be ashamed,' to be well 'instructed unto the kingdom of heaven,' and to 'bring forth out of his treasure things new and old.' The studies and qualifications of the Clergy are forced onwards and upwards by that resistless pressure of intellect which is urging every class of society upon the footsteps of that which is next above it; and if they do not yield to the impulse, or rather if they do not anticipate and prevent it, by the most strenuous efforts to maintain their relative position, and to prove themselves masters of the knowledge which the people 'seek at their mouth,' they will discredit their order, and render their ministry ineffective, and endanger the Establishment; which, however it may be fenced with protecting laws, will cease to maintain its ancient ascendancy in the affections of the

people, should it ever cease to be eminently useful. It will cease to be useful when its clergy cease to be respected; and although it be true that a certain degree of respect will always be yielded to honest intentions and a holy life, yet since we are to be preachers and teachers, as well as doers of the Word, we must not, in that capacity, 'suffer any to despise us,' nor permit the cause of truth to be wounded through the sides of its incompetent defenders.

"We are therefore not only authorized, but in my opinion required—authorized by the abundant supply of candidates, and required by the exigencies of the Church,—to look for a more systematic and laborious preparation for the ministry; and to expect that clerical accomplishments shall be raised with the universally rising qualifications of every other profession. We have perhaps some reason for wishing that our Universities should do more than, even with the recent improvements in their system, they have hitherto done, towards effecting this desirable result. For my own part, I entertain a very strong opinion as to the necessity of one or more theological seminaries, in which, besides going through a prescribed course of study for one or two years, the candidates for holy orders might be exercised in reading the Liturgy of our Church, and in the composition and delivery of sermons. The establishment of these, which need not interfere with the accustomed course of academical study, must necessarily be a work of difficulty, requiring much consideration and forethought. In the mean time we have it in our power, by exercising a stricter scrutiny, to secure a certain degree of competency in our candidates; and I have sincere pleasure in bearing the testimony of my own experience to the fact, that the standard of ministerial acquirements has already been greatly raised, without any diminution in the number of applicants for admission into the ministry, and with the most obvious and striking benefit to the Church itself."

The requirements which, upon these grounds, the Bishop proposed to make upon all candidates for Holy Orders were—a familiarity with the historical and prophetic parts of the Old Testament,—that general theological knowledge without which neither the evidences of Revealed Religion, nor the scriptural orthodoxy of our Church can be rightly understood, much less proved to others,—ability to render plain and easy English into correct grammatical Latin,—and acquaintance with the whole of the New Testament in the original language, except, perhaps, the Revelation.

In answer to the objection that by this raised standard of attainments some persons would be excluded from the ministry whose faculties are less vigorous and active than those of others, the Bishop expressed his opinion “that if a young man, with all the advantages of a good education, and knowing himself to be destined to this sacred and arduous calling, is unable to write Latin correctly, and to construe the Greek Testament, at the age of three and twenty, he is either greatly deficient in diligence and seriousness, or he is not qualified by natural endowments for the office of an expositor of God’s Word. And ‘if some parents,’” the Bishop continued, “to use the words of Bishop Sanderson, ‘must needs have their children thrust into the ministry, though they have neither a head nor a heart for it,’ we tell them that our duty, and the interests of the Church of Christ, and the cause of men’s salvation, will not permit us to second their mistaken design; that their sons are not ‘*rightly* called’ to the ministry; ‘it being certain that God never calleth any man but to that for which He hath in some competent measure enabled him.’ Let them seek for some other profession, in which their incapacity may injure themselves alone; and not intrude into a calling which will render their ignorance infectious, and make the little light that is in them to be gross darkness which may be felt.”



CHAPTER VII.

Revolution in France—Its Influence upon English Politics—The "Sovereignty of the People"—The Duke of Wellington's Declaration against Parliamentary Reform—Reform Ministry—Reform Bill of 1831—Coronation of King William and Queen Adelaide—The Coronation Sermon—Scriptural Principles and the British Constitution—Warnings against a Godless Policy—Blessings of National Religion—Admonition to the Monarch—Views of Bishop Blomfield on the Reform Question—Embarrassing Attitude of the Episcopate—Illness and Death of Mr. Charles Blomfield—The Reform Bill in the House of Lords—Unjust Imputations on Bishop Blomfield—His Apology for the Episcopate—Unpopularity of the Bishops—Bishop Blomfield and the Parishioners of St. Ann's, Soho—Temper of the Popular Mind—The Bristol Riots—Proposed Creation of Peers—The Reform Bill of 1832—Bishop Blomfield's Explanation of his Conduct—Resentment of the Tory Peers—The Duke of Newcastle and the Principle of Expediency.

WHILE Bishop Blomfield was thus engaged in preparing the way for an efficient administration of the affairs of his diocese, with a view to render the Church, as far as in him lay, better able to cope with the spirit of the age, with the exigencies of the times, and with the difficulties of her position, an event was approaching which, though extraneous not only to the Church, but to this country, had an immense influence upon the destinies of both. In the last days of the month which the Bishop had devoted to his visitation, the King of France was, by a sudden popular explosion, despoiled of his crown and driven into exile; and in his place a Revolution-king

was set up on a "throne" established on republican foundations. This event,—happening at a moment when the popular demand for an enlargement of the representative basis of the Constitution, raised a short time before at the instigation of designing political leaders, had received fresh strength from the general impression that the Monarch who had just ascended the British throne was favourable to the cause of Parliamentary Reform,—greatly added to the excitement naturally incident, at such a crisis, to a general election. The intelligence of the political convulsion on the other side of the channel arrived within a few days after the dissolution of the Parliament which was sitting at the time of the demise of the Crown, and which had been kept together only for the completion of the necessary routine business of the session. The general election, therefore, took place under the twofold excitement produced, on the one hand, by the promise of a Reform Bill which was to prove a panacea for all the ills the body politic is heir to, and on the other hand by the startling example of the overthrow of a reactionary Government and dynasty, whose title was the "divine right" of kings, and the substitution in its place of a government and dynasty based upon the principle of the "sovereignty of the people" as the sole fountain of political power. The Parliament elected under these inauspicious circumstances met at the beginning of November, and had not been assembled a fortnight when the ill-advised declaration of the Duke of Wellington against all reform raised the fever of popular ferment to a pitch of exasperation which at one time seriously threatened the Monarchy. The intended visit of the King to the City on the first Lord Mayor's day after his accession, had to be abandoned through fear of personal insult and outrage to the King and his Royal Consort; and in a few days after, the Duke and his Cabinet took the opportunity of a defeat in the House of Commons upon a

question connected with the Civil List, to retire before the coming tempest. Their resignation led the way to Earl Grey's Premiership, brought Mr. Henry Brougham upon the wool-sack, and made room in the House of Commons for Lord John Russell, as the Ministerial champion of Parliamentary Reform. A general programme of the proposed policy of the new Ministry was followed by the adjournment of the two Houses; and when they met again early in the year 1831, a Reform Bill was introduced into the Lower House of Parliament as a ministerial measure. But although successful in the first instance, the Ministry suffered towards the end of April a defeat in its progress, which was followed by a dissolution and another appeal to the country, not without a vigorous resistance on the part of the King, who was literally coerced into the act by his overbearing "servants." The general election which ensued was, as might be expected under such circumstances, more tumultuous than the preceding one; and when the new Parliament met, in June, 1831, it was beyond all doubt certain that the Reform Bill to be proposed to it by the Government would be carried triumphantly in the Lower House; while it was equally well understood that a decided majority of the Upper House was resolved to throw it out, and that the King himself, alarmed by the violence with which the popular demands were urged, was averse to the large measure of concession contemplated by his Ministers. It was during the progress of the debates on this Bill through the House of Commons that, on the 8th of September, 1831, the Coronation of King William and Queen Adelaide took place in Westminster Abbey; and on Bishop Blomfield devolved the difficult task of preaching the Coronation Sermon at a moment when the Monarchy and the democracy were confronting each other in an attitude of menace unparalleled in this country since the day when the Martyr King unfurled the Royal Standard in opposition

to his refractory Commons. The discourse pronounced by the Bishop on this trying occasion is not more remarkable for the judicious moderation of its language, than for the soundness of exposition with which he brought the principles of the Revealed Word of God to bear upon the responsibilities of rulers, and the duties of subjects, in a constitution of mixed character, the land-marks of which were at this very time the subject of dispute.

“The Christian religion which was intended for universal acceptance, and which was in due time to make all ‘the kingdoms of this world the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ,’ lays down no limitation of the right, which all men originally possess, to choose their own form of government. But it supposes this to have been already done; and then deals with the relations of civil society, only as they are instrumental in promoting the glory of God and the happiness of mankind.

“Whatsoever government is so constituted as not to interfere with those ends, although it be, as to its form and details, an ordinance of man, is, as to its legitimate authority, ‘ordained of God;’ and that which most directly and effectually promotes the attainment of those ends, may with the greatest justice assert its claims to obedience and honour, ‘not only for wrath, but for conscience’ sake.’

“On these grounds, without asserting the Divine authority of any government, as inherent in the form of its constitution, we may yet maintain that it is a part of the duty which we owe to God, ‘to submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake; whether it be to the King, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.’

“Under a government which unites in itself the chief advantages of every form, it may well be expected, independently of religious considerations, that the laws will be most readily obeyed, and the magistrates most highly

honoured. And where the supreme authority of the Monarch is at once a safeguard to the freedom, and a barrier against the licence, of the people; where the king who guides the state, is himself under the guidance of law, the love of civil order will be most likely to prevail, and the principle of loyalty will be most deeply rooted. But neither will the love of civil order be strong enough to ensure the stability of government, nor the principle of loyalty be genuine or permanent, unless they spring from a conviction that 'the powers that be, are ordained of God.' Men must 'fear God,' before they can duly 'honour the King.' Nor, on the other hand, will the trust reposed in Princes by the Sovereign Ruler of the world be faithfully or efficiently discharged, unless they remember that they are the 'ministers of God for good;' and that all the measures of their policy should tend to promote the great ends of the Divine government, the virtue and the happiness of mankind. It is the Lord alone who can effectually bind upon the people, not the shackles of slavery, but the cords of a just and lawful obedience; and it is a forgetfulness of His law which begets oppression and injustice on one side, discontent and rebellion on the other."

After pointing out the significance of the ceremonial of coronation, as tending to quicken and confirm in both rulers and subjects a sense of their mutual obligations, the Bishop went on to say—"The duties of righteous government on one side, and of allegiance and fealty on the other, do not depend upon any outward ceremonies, nor any formal declarations; but are of intrinsic and necessary obligation. Yet since that obligation depends upon the will of God, as inferred from the constitution of human nature, and as declared in His Word, it is expedient and profitable that a direct reference should be made to His authority, as the original of all law, the fountain of all honour, and the source of all strength, by whom nations flourish, and 'kings reign, and princes decree justice.' And happy is it, both

for monarch and people, when that reference is extended, beyond the solemnity of a single oath and of one day's religious service, to the whole tenor of their mutual relation, and made the principle of government, and the bond of social life. If the Word of God be true, and if the history of the past be not deceitful, evil will sooner or later befall that nation which loses sight of the Sovereignty of Jehovah, and substitutes other foundations for the duties of public society, than those which have been everlastingly laid by Himself. Evil will befall that nation where the maxims of a temporary and secular expediency are permitted to supersede the motives and rules which are drawn from the fountain of eternal truth; and where the ruling Providence of God, and the supremacy of the Gospel, if they be not in terms denied, are not recognized as influencing the counsels of princes, nor as affecting the welfare of states. It is, we would fain believe, rather to be attributed to the fastidious refinement of modern society, than to a real decay of religious principle amongst us, that even in our own country, so remarkably favoured and protected by the Most High, His Providence is less frequently referred to, and His glory less ostensibly sought in our public acts and measures than it was wont to be. We fear it can hardly be said of us, as a nation, that we 'acknowledge God in all our ways,' or 'give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name.'

"Yet it is not enough for the ends of national piety, that religion is merely tolerated, or permitted to enjoy the privileges which she inherits from antiquity; and left to diffuse, as best she may, her salutary influence through the mass of the community. It is necessary that she should be recognized and honoured in public acts by those who frame, and those who administer, the laws. It is surely not less important to the well-being of society, that they who sit in the high-places of the earth, and are intended to be 'the lights of the world,' should display the influence

of Christian principle, than that the people who are to be ruled and guided by them, should have 'the fear of God before their eyes.' "

The Bishop concluded his discourse with the following words of faithful admonition to the Monarch on whose investiture with the insignia of his regal office it formed so appropriate a comment:— "While the joyful acclamations of a loyal people hail the accession of their Sovereign to a kingdom which the prudence and firmness of his predecessor have transmitted to him unimpaired in dignity and strength, it is the duty of him who is commissioned to persuade men to lay hold upon that 'kingdom which cannot be moved,' to remind his hearers that the most splendid ornaments which decorate the fabric of society belong only to the present scene. The period is at hand when their possessors, if they have escaped the trials of adverse fortune, must lay them aside, and abide the scrutiny of their Omniscient Judge divested of all that is not essential to the being of a moral agent. At that hour how little comfort will be derived from the shadows of departing glory, the faded purple, the tarnished gold, the broken sceptre of their worldly state ! But how rich and sublime a consolation will be that of the Christian monarch, who has made God his strength, and Christ his salvation, and the Gospel his rule of government ; and who can thus sum up the true glories of his regality, and the history of his rule : 'I put on righteousness and it clothed me ; my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.' "

Considering the sentiments which, on this solemn occasion, Bishop Blomfield expressed, touching the foundations and the aims of constitutional government, it was not to be expected that he would feel himself called upon to support the Tory Peers, at all hazards, in their resistance to Parliamentary reform. Holding himself bound on principle to eschew the rôle of a politician, he naturally viewed

the whole question in reference to its effect upon the Church, whose welfare he had primarily at heart. And doing so, he might well be excused if he thought that the cause of the Church of England,—not to say of the Church of Christ,—was not so identified with the system of rotten boroughs, which the Tories had taken the fatal resolution of defending inch by inch, nor so essentially at variance with the principles of popular representation advocated by the reformers, as to render it imperative on a Christian Bishop to take a decided part against the proposed reform, and in defence of the old system, the abuses of which were of too crying a character to be denied. At the same time, with his penetration of mind, he could not blind himself to the extremely democratic character of the Bill introduced by the Government, and to the serious inconveniences and dangers which it was likely to produce. While he deemed it extremely unwise by an unreasoning and absolute resistance still further to exasperate the popular mind, he was anxious that the Bill should undergo considerable modifications, on the admission or rejection of which his own final vote in regard to it would be dependent.

This, amidst the fierce clashings of party conflict, was not an easy position to maintain. But its difficulties were seriously aggravated by the resolution come to by the whole Episcopate, with Archbishop Howley at their head—the two Episcopal hangers on of the Whig party, Maltby of Chichester, and Bathurst of Norwich, being the only exceptions—to make common cause with the late Government and the Tory Peers, and to throw out the Bill upon the motion for the second reading. However strong the conviction of Bishop Blomfield might be, that the course intended to be pursued by them was extremely unwise, he could not with any comfort of mind contemplate the contingency of finding himself in direct opposition to his revered patron and ecclesiastical superior, and to nearly the whole of the Episcopate, and placed in

odious juxta-position with the two Whig bishops, with whose views and tactics, whether political or ecclesiastical, he had nothing in common. To complete the embarrassment of his situation, he was precluded from offering any explanation of his views, which, had he given it, must inevitably have tended to supply additional fuel to the public animosity against the Bishops, which had already risen to an alarming height. The position in which the Bishops had placed themselves, was sufficiently critical and painful without the aggravation of one of their own order, and that one whose word had all the weight justly belonging to Bishop Blomfield's talents, character, and position, standing up in his place in Parliament, and by his speech and his vote condemning the course to which they unfortunately were pledged.

While the Bishop of London was thus perplexed by a variety of conflicting motives and feelings,—clear only on this one point, that it would not be right for him to vote against the second reading, and thereby to shut out all consideration of the question of reform,—an event occurred in his own private circle, which not only afforded him an opportunity of preserving an entire neutrality, but appeared even to supersede the necessity of giving an explanation of that course. The health of his father had for the last three years been greatly impaired, so much so as to impose upon him the necessity of seclusion from society, and retirement from the public business of his native borough, in which he had taken an active part, having no less than five times served the office of alderman. Latterly his condition had become much worse, and the Bishop having been hastily summoned to his bedside, arrived in time to witness his last moments. The death of Mr. Charles Blomfield, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, took place on Wednesday, the 28th of September; and on the following Wednesday, the 5th of October, the Bishop followed the remains of his beloved and universally

respected parent to the grave. From the high estimation in which the deceased was held by his fellow-townsmen, the attendance at his funeral was unusually large, giving to it a public rather than a private character. The sensitive mind of the Bishop was powerfully affected by the mournful ceremonial, and the local journal, in chronicling the event, observed that "it was an impressive scene to witness the distinguished in rank and talent bowed by the deep sorrow which is the common lot of mortality."

It was while Bishop Blomfield was thus shut up in the house of mourning, that, on the 3rd of October, Earl Grey moved the second reading of the Reform Bill in the House of Lords; when a five days' debate ensued, which terminated, on the night of the 7th, in the rejection of the Bill by a majority of 41, the numbers being 199 against, and 158 for the second reading. In the list of the majority were the names of twenty-one Bishops, while in the list of the minority were the two Bishops, of Chichester, who was present, and of Norwich, who sent his proxy in favour of the Bill. Not one member of the Episcopal Bench opened his lips during the debate, except the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, while announcing his intention to vote against the Bill, expressed himself favourable to a moderate measure of reform, but unable to give his concurrence to the measure then before the House, and, he added, willing to take his share of the general calamity, if, as the supporters of the Bill threatened, popular violence and outrage should be the consequence of its rejection.

That the Bishop of London should rush from his father's funeral at Bury on the Wednesday, to his place in the House of Lords on Friday, to take part in the debate which had lasted the whole week, and had been inaugurated by a significant menace to the Episcopal Order on the part of the Prime Minister, was assuredly not to be expected. Had Bishop Blomfield been ever so eager a partisan on

either side, it would not have been decent for him to have done so; but considering the view which he took of the question, as well as the position in which that view placed him towards the Archbishop and the rest of the Episcopate, and which necessarily precluded his giving a silent vote by sending his proxy,—to have mingled in the debate on the last night, the only night on which it was possible for him to have been present, would have been a gratuitous violence to his feelings in the hour of affliction, and a no less gratuitous violation of the ordinary decorum by which the seasons of mourning are surrounded. But the bitterness of party spirit developed in the course of this struggle knew no bounds, and Bishop Blomfield's conduct on the occasion was made the subject of vituperation as unmeasured as it was unjust. He was accused of time-serving and tergiversation, and even the private sorrow with which he was bowed down, was pressed into their service by his detractors, who made it the subject of derision, and drew an invidious contrast between the fact of his having on the day after the division fulfilled his engagement to preach the inaugural sermon at the opening of King's College, and his absence from the debate and division on the Reform Bill; as if there was no difference between the solemn and tranquil discharge of an ecclesiastical function, and participation in an excited debate on a hotly contested political question. That a desire to truckle to the Government of the day, or a disposition to swerve from the line of duty through fear of popular obloquy, or faithless defection from the general body of the Episcopate,—all which charges were brought against him, had no share in the part which he had acted, was made evident on the Tuesday following the rejection of the Bill, when, having resumed his seat in the House, and an attack having been made on the Episcopal Bench, on account of their vote on the Reform Bill, by Lord Suffield and Lord Chancellor Brougham,

who taunted them with having endeavoured to "trip up the Government," the Bishop of London stood forward as the champion and apologist of his brethren. After observing that, owing to a domestic occurrence, he himself had given neither opinion nor vote on the Bill; he denied, on the part of the Episcopal Bench, that any such design was entertained by them against a Government which had "at all times been found willing to concur with them in measures likely to promote the welfare of the Church," and argued that "there was no ground, on account of a particular vote, conscientiously given by them, to impute to them a feeling of hostility to the existing Administration."

His language on this occasion, which could not have been stronger if he himself had been a party to the vote impugned, was such as would be prompted by sympathy with his brethren, however he might differ from them in opinion, and by a generous unwillingness not to stand aloof, or to appear to separate himself from them, in the hour of their unpopularity. Of that unpopularity, indeed, he received his full share. The popular clamour against the Bishops, which Earl Grey had insolently endorsed in his place in Parliament, by bidding them be "attentive to the signs of the times, put their house in order, and prepare for the coming storm," grew more violent than ever after the rejection of the Bill. It was not safe for the Bishops to appear in public. The Archbishop himself was assailed and grossly insulted by the mob at Croydon, on his return from a Bible meeting. Dr. Rudge, the only clergyman who ventured to present himself at the levee after the rejection of the Bill, being mistaken for a Bishop by the populace, was violently assaulted in his carriage, and had to be rescued by the police. A memorial from the parishioners was addressed to the churchwardens of Clerkenwell, requesting "that, in consequence of the irreligious conduct of the Bishops in respect of

the Reform Bill, no reverend Prelate should be again solicited to preach in the church of that parish." And on its becoming known that the Bishop of London had undertaken to preach at the re-opening of the parish church of St. Ann's, Soho, on Sunday, the 23rd of October, a paragraph appeared in an evening paper, stating, that if the Bishop should persist in that intention, it had been determined by the parishioners, to the number of 1100, to leave the church in a body, the moment he appeared in the pulpit. Under these circumstances the Bishop thought it more prudent to cancel the engagement, and accordingly he wrote to Dr. Mcleod, the incumbent of St. Ann's, expressing his regret that he was "unavoidably prevented" from preaching in his church on the occasion in question.

This circumstance, too, was—as at that time everything was sure to be—turned into a weapon of attack against the Bishop. The abandonment of his intention was attributed to personal fear; the apprehension of any demonstration, such as had been announced, was ridiculed as groundless. The imputation of shrinking from personal danger was, by the Tory organ, brought in aggravation of the odium which he had already incurred with that party by absenting himself from the debate and division on the Reform Bill; and by the liberal organs the circumstance was seized upon as a triumphant evidence of the public "detestation" in which the whole Episcopal Order was held. "Such a proof," said *The Times* on the next Monday morning, "of public antipathy towards the entire Order, whose conduct in the House of Lords was so conspicuous on the second reading of the Reform Bill, is without example in modern history, and is worth a whole library of comments. The Bishop of London did not vote against the Bill, but then he did not vote for it, and the nation will not be served by halves. There are few," continued that journal, in a strain of affected

regard for the interests of the Church and of religion, "if any, among the Bishops themselves who regret more sincerely than we have done for some time past, the obloquy—amounting even to detestation,—into which their Order has unhappily fallen throughout the United Kingdom." This was the same journal, be it remembered, which had, not long before, recommended the populace to "plaster the enemies of the people with mud, and duck them in horse-ponds;" in accordance with which highly constitutional and Christian counsel, the people of Coventry had signified to their Bishop their intention of applying the prescription to his person, if he should dare to show himself within the precincts of their city. That the Bishop of London was not called upon, while the popular mind was in this state of ferment, to persist in presenting himself in person before a body of people who had openly announced their deliberate intention of insulting him, and in him the Ordinance of God, while the original purpose of the arrangement, the edification of the people, was clearly unattainable, is too obvious to need any argument. Yet, if proof were wanted that in taking the course he did, the Bishop was guided by sound wisdom, and a correct appreciation of the temper of the people, it was afforded within a week of the day on which he was to have made his appearance in the pulpit of St. Ann's, by the demolition of many public buildings, among them the Episcopal palace, as well as of private houses, the wholesale destruction of immense property, and, worse than all, the loss of numberless lives, in the city of Bristol, where a civil officer, constrained by a positive obligation, the imperious pressure of which the Bishop of London could not have pleaded, pursued the very line of conduct,—defiance of popular menace,—which the detractors of the Bishop contended that he ought to have adopted.

But the wisdom of the course which Bishop Blomfield marked out for himself at this important crisis in the

political history of the empire, and which, had his advice been taken, would have been pursued by the whole Episcopate,—a course which, by tempering the violence of high Tory opposition to all reform, and inducing a policy of moderate concession, might have averted many of the mischiefs which afterwards ensued, both in Church and State,—was destined to receive a yet more signal vindication than the deplorable result of the “progress” of the Recorder of Bristol. Parliament having been prorogued on the 20th of October, re-assembled on the 6th of December, and on the 12th of that month Lord John Russell introduced into the House of Commons another and a more democratic Reform Bill,—that which, with some modifications, became eventually the law of the land. The crisis in the State had now risen to such a height, and had so far outgrown the control of the men who, for their own ambitious ends, had evoked it, that Earl Grey and his colleagues, as they have since confessed, “felt as if crossing the bridge figured by the poets, consisting of a single arch of sharp steel, spanning a fiery gulf on either hand.” The danger of the monarchy itself perishing in the shock of parties had become so imminent, that the King, for a second time coerced by the “servants of the Crown,” gave a written authority to Earl Grey to create as many new Peers as might be necessary to swamp the Upper House, and so to procure the passing of the Reform Bill. The execution of this revolutionary measure was averted by the King himself, who, by privately exerting his personal influence, prevailed upon a sufficient number of Peers, either to support the Bill, or, at all events, to refrain from opposition; the result of which was, that the Bill passed the second reading by a majority of nine—including twelve Bishops, among whom was Bishop Blomfield; while fifteen Bishops, among them the Archbishop of Canterbury, voted against it,—and the third reading was carried by a majority of 106 to 22, on which

occasion not a single member of the Episcopal Bench recorded his vote in opposition to it.

In the course of the debate on the second reading, in the early part of April, 1832, Bishop Blomfield felt himself at liberty,—the public mind having been somewhat tranquillized by the prospect of the Bill being allowed to become law,—to enter into an explanation of his conduct with regard to the former Bill. He then declared that long before that measure had come up to the House of Lords, he had determined, and informed his friends of his determination, to vote for the second reading,—not that he had not great objections to the Bill, and might, in the event of their not being removed, eventually have voted for its rejection, but because in his opinion “less mischief was likely to result from an impartial consideration of the Bill in Committee than from its unqualified rejection.” At the same time he frankly avowed that he had “felt an insuperable reluctance to stand forward on that occasion in opposition to the views and opinions of those to whom he was accustomed to look with deference and respect; and to whom it must be at all times his desire, and in most cases his duty, to pay the utmost deference and respect.”

With regard to the new Bill then before the House, the Bishop thus stated his reasons for giving his vote in favour of the second reading, with a view to its consideration in Committee:—“The time for neutrality with respect to this Bill has in my opinion gone by, and I have made up my mind to vote for its second reading; not because I cordially and entirely approve of the Bill, but because, under existing circumstances, and in the present state of the country, it appears to me the safest and most prudent plan, to take the Bill, recommended as it is for the second time by a large majority of the other House, and, if not by the majority, at least by a formidable minority of the people; to deal with it as best we may; to remove or alter its most objectionable features; yet not so far to trench

upon the principles of the Bill as to delay the speedy settlement of this great question." After avowing that, "for his own part, he entertained a strong persuasion of the absolute necessity of some extensive measure of reform," he went on to say:—"Surely, then, my Lords, we are not greatly to blame who consent—for we do no more—to take into our serious consideration, under the pressure of a necessity the existence of which scarcely any one denies, the only remedy that has been proposed for a most serious and acknowledged evil. Whether or not that remedy is the best and wisest that could be devised, is altogether another question. Whether or not a more moderate amount of reform would not have satisfied the existing appetite for change when the first Bill was introduced, I will not venture to pronounce; neither will I venture to say whether or not a more sparing application of the pruning knife to the ancient constitution of the country would not have been sufficient to pare off its excrescences, to remove its encumbrances, to renovate its vigour, and to restore its verdure. At present, my Lords, we must deal with things as they are; and I cannot but express my conviction that it would be as vain to expect that the sun would trace back the degrees by which he has gone down on the dial, as that the sentiments and opinions of the people should ever turn into precisely their former train, after all that has taken place within the last twelve months. It is true the inundation has subsided, but the current has found its way into a new channel, from which it will be impossible wholly to divert it; and it appears to me to be the part of true wisdom to watch and regulate the course of the stream which cannot be entirely stopped, to embank and secure the country through which it takes its way, and so to deepen and widen the bed in which it is henceforth to flow, as that it may fertilize and not desolate the land. Whether this happy consummation, my Lords, will ever result from this, or indeed, from any measure of reform is,

I admit, a matter of doubtful experiment. But all such experiments are doubtful, and it is admitted on all sides that some experiment must be tried. My Lords, I feel that the longer this experiment is delayed, the more questionable its chance of success becomes; I feel that the longer the people of the country are allowed to brood over grievances, real or imaginary, the more potent and drastic must be the remedy which, at last, it will be necessary to apply."

At the conclusion of his speech, having declared himself "compelled to become a supporter of the Bill, so far as the second reading was concerned," he added: "I shall give that vote, my Lords, in the conscientious persuasion that by so doing I shall best consult the dignity of this House, and the peace and security of the empire. That I give that vote with an entire freedom from all apprehension as to the consequences of this important measure, I am far, indeed, from asserting: he must be a very confident or a very careless man who would. But I give it with an encouraging hope that if all parties will enter into the consideration of this question with a disposition mutually to concede whatever can be conscientiously conceded, giving one another credit for rectitude of intention, and respecting even honest prejudices and prepossessions—we may, under the blessing of Him who has so long protected and prospered this nation, concur in the adoption of a measure which may ensure the purity of the representation, conciliate the affections of the people, and add strength and perpetuity to whatever is most valuable in our constitution."

The moderation and wisdom of the course thus recommended by Bishop Blomfield are so apparent; its absolute necessity—revolution being the only alternative,—is so evident, that at this distance of time, on a calm review of the history of that great struggle, it seems difficult to understand how its adoption could be made a matter

of reproach to any man, and above all to a Christian Bishop, one of whose chief duties is "to seek peace and ensue it." Party spirit, however, recognizes no obligations but those that are conducive to its own ends; and it was long before the part which Bishop Blomfield had acted during the progress of the Reform Bill, was forgiven,—if by some it ever was forgiven,—on the part of the more violent of the Tory Peers. An amusing, and at the same time instructive, illustration of the feeling which they entertained towards him, was afforded in the next session of Parliament, by the Duke of Newcastle, who, be it remembered, had, in the ruins of his princely mansion at Nottingham, unmistakable ocular demonstration of the practical results of the policy which he so much admired. In the course of the debate on the Irish Church Temporalities Bill, the Duke, feeling dissatisfied with the conduct of the Bishops, who, he thought, were "looking too much to consequences, and too little to principles," asked, in pointed allusion to Bishop Blomfield, "whether the Right Reverend Prelate had collated himself to the office of high priest in the temple of expediency." To this taunt the Bishop made the following characteristic reply:—"As to the question which the Noble Duke has suggested,—namely, whether or not I have collated myself to the high priesthood in the temple of expediency,—I beg to reply, that I do not feel myself worthy of such a station; but I tell that Noble Duke that I consider expediency is a material point, when tried by the rule of morality and truth. I surely need not remind the Noble Duke that one of the most eminent moralists of our times, (I mean Dr. Paley,) has admitted that expediency was a proper ground to proceed upon, under particular circumstances. In my opinion, Dr. Paley is mistaken, to a certain degree; and I should have guarded myself, by a more explicit statement, against those misconceptions and misrepresentations to which his opinion has given rise. I am not,

however, unwilling to enlist myself as the follower of that great man ; and if the Noble Duke will invest me in the situation to which he has referred,—although I certainly do not think that he is qualified to do so,—I am not reluctant to receive the investiture even at his hands.”

As a repartee, this half-humorous, half-serious answer leaves nothing to desire. But it is worthy of record chiefly because of the light which it throws upon the train of moral reasoning by which Bishop Blomfield arrived at the conclusions which regulated his public conduct. How, under the guidance of those conclusions, he sped in the progress of his career, the sequel will show.





CHAPTER VIII.

National iniquity - Judgment mixed with mercy—Approach of the Cholera—Its ravages in the Metropolis—Cholera Prevention Bills—Their Godless character—Impiety in the House of Commons—National recognition of the Providence of God—General Fast—Bishop Blomfield's Directions to the Clergy—His sermon at the Chapel Royal—Divine Government of the World—Nations Instruments in God's Hand—The Church of Christ and the Kingdoms of the Earth—Retrospect of the Recent History of the World—The War with France—Success dearly bought—Poisoned Cup of Prosperity—Sagacity of Bishop Blomfield's Mind—Its Hesitation and its Boldness—Confession of National Sin—Searching Questions—Neglect of the Lord's Day—Duty of the Higher Classes—Effects of the National Chastisement—Demand for Church Reform—Exaggerated Notions of the Wealth of the Church—The "Black List"—Revenue of the See of London—Proposed Redistribution of Church Property—Desirableness of Inquiry—Sanguine Expectations of Bishop Blomfield—Poverty of the Parochial Clergy—Financial Reform in the Church.

ON two points, during the period which we have passed in review, it appears that the mind of Bishop Blomfield had become deeply impressed,—one, the apprehension of some calamitous visitation of the Divine displeasure on account of the overflowing of national iniquity,—the other, the anticipation of a severe ordeal, of a perilous crisis, impending over the Church. In neither of these prognostications, as the event proved, had he been deceived. The fiery trial that was to try the Church was, indeed, close at hand; and so was the chastisement of the Almighty upon a God-forgetting people. By the wisdom and goodness of

Him who "in wrath remembereth mercy," it was appointed that the chastisement should come first in order; that before the violence of popular hatred and the subtlety of factious devices against God's Ordinance had time to run to the full excess of destruction on which they were bent, and to compass the overthrow of the Church of Christ in this land,—at least as a national Church,—the bridle of one of God's sore judgments should be put into their mouths, to humble the pride of the Great Ones of the land, and to curb the head-strong passions of the multitude. While the democratic frenzy which had been created by the authors and promoters of the Reform Bill was at its height, when the character of a successor of the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ had become a name of reproach and a title to popular outrage, the first note of alarm was sounded, announcing the arrival on the shores of Great Britain of that devastating scourge which had for a number of years slowly but surely progressed from the land of its origin in the far east towards the European continent. As long as the malady was confined to a seaport town in a remote corner of the island, though watched by some with a feeling of dread, it was little heeded; when, early in the spring of the year 1832, it began to spread inland, popular alarm began to spread with it; but it was not until the pestilence had settled, like an incubus, on the metropolis, where it swept away thousands,—not until, satiated, as it were, with victims from among the ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-lodged inhabitants of crowded, ill-drained, and ill-ventilated courts and alleys, it marked for its ghastly prey—as if in derision of the levelling spirit of the age—the inmates of lordly mansions, confounding them with the common herd in the horribleness and loathsomeness of its deadly visitation, that the thoughts of men in high places could be induced to turn to the Hand from which the infliction proceeded, and from which alone deliverance could be obtained.

It is a remarkable fact, indicative, more perhaps than any other symptom, of the extent of the inroad which the spirit of irreligion had made upon the ancient faith of the nation, that when, early in the session of 1832, Bills were introduced into Parliament, empowering the Executive to adopt and to enforce such sanitary measures as might appear best calculated to oppose the march of the pestilence, the preambles of those Bills, reciting the visitation of the epidemic, contained not the remotest reference to the Providence of God, or to the need of the Divine help, and the Divine blessing upon the human means devised to check its progress. When attention was called in the House of Commons to this grave omission, so insensible were the members of the Government to the significance of the issue raised, that they treated the omission as a common oversight; and so little did they feel themselves called upon to repair it, that they deprecated a division upon the question, and actually prevailed on the Member who had moved the insertion of words recognizing the Hand of Divine Providence in sending the pestilence, and the need of Divine assistance for arresting it, to withdraw his amendment, and to allow the Cholera Prevention Bill for England to pass the Lower House in the godless shape in which it had been introduced. A still more curious and striking illustration of the spirit that had obtained the ascendancy in that assembly,—the spirit of treating the duty of reverence for the Divine Word and will with contempt, and regulating the decision of public affairs, even on religious questions, by deference to the will and the voice of the people,—was afforded on the Bill for Scotland coming under consideration. While the English Bill had passed the House of Commons like a document from an atheist pen, no sooner was it urged that the omission of all reference to the Providence of God would be offensive to the popular feeling in that part of the United Kingdom, than the House of Commons decided

upon the adoption of the very amendment which, in the absence of a similar plea, it had, only the day before, summarily rejected. In the course of the debates which took place on the subject, one of the supporters of the Government even forgot himself to the extent of denouncing the proposal to recognize the Hand of God in the national calamity, in the coarsest language, as "cant, humbug, and hypocrisy." And not only was he not rebuked, either by the Speaker or by the general voice of the House, but after Sir Robert Inglis,—that true type of the English gentleman and Churchman,—had administered to him the indignant reproof which his impiety deserved, he was actually permitted to make a speech in reply, justifying the expressions he had used, and to divide the House upon the question. Notwithstanding these demonstrations of an infidel spirit in the Lower Branch of the Legislature, the Statute Book was not suffered to be sullied by an Act bearing the stamp of that spirit on its forehead. When the two Bills came up together to the House of Lords, the Bishop of London moved, and without any opposition carried, the insertion into the preamble of the English Bill of the words already inserted into the Scotch Bill, which set forth that "it had *pleased Almighty God to visit* the United Kingdom with the disease called the Cholera," and described the Bill as having for its object "to prevent, as far as may be possible, *by the Divine blessing*, the spreading of the said disease." The observations with which the Bishop introduced this amendment were brief, but to the purpose. "Although," he said, "I am not of opinion that it is expedient or conducive to the interests of true religion, repeatedly to refer to the Providence of God and the Divine interference, in Acts of the legislature relating to matters of this kind, yet I do think that there are occasions when, as a Christian people, we are called upon to do so." In support of this view the Bishop, by way of precedent, instanced the Act

passed for the rebuilding of the city of London after the great fire in 1666, and the Regency Act rendered necessary by the illness of King George the Third, adding that "the present was, in his opinion, an occasion when it was 'decorous and proper' to make a reference of this kind to the Providence of God."

The decisive tone taken by religious men in both Houses of Parliament was not without its salutary effect. The same Ministers who had brought in their Cholera Prevention Bills without any reference whatever to the Providence of God, within a few weeks after announced their intention of appointing a General Day of Fasting and Humiliation,—a determination induced, no doubt, not only by what had taken place in Parliament, but by the private representations of the Heads of the Church. As soon as the royal proclamation appointing the day—Wednesday, the 21st of March, 1832—had appeared, Bishop Blomfield issued a circular to the clergy of his diocese, in which he expressed the hope that the day would be "observed with more than usual solemnity, under a deep sense, not only of our present danger, but of the sins by which we have deserved, if they have not called down, this infliction of the Divine displeasure." At the same time he urged upon the clergy, and through them upon their flocks, the duty of "sanctifying our fast, not only by bringing before the Lord contrite and penitent hearts, and a spirit of supplication, but in the way which He has declared to be most pleasing to Himself, by an increased measure of charity to our poorer brethren; 'dealing our bread to the hungry, and bringing the poor that are afflicted to our house.'" The circular went on to direct the clergy to make collections in their churches, and, after providing for the necessities of their several parishes, to remit the surplus to a general fund to be raised for the relief of the more distressed portions of the metropolis. The result did not disappoint the pious intentions and expectations of the Bishop. Not-

withstanding an attempt made by the Radicals to turn the day into an occasion of popular agitation and disturbance, which was effectually repressed by active measures on the part of the Government, and by the voice of public disapprobation, the churches were crowded by large and devout congregations attired in the garb of mourning, and the collections were marked by a liberality befitting the occasion. Bishop Blomfield himself officiated on that day in the Chapel Royal at St. James's Palace, and preached a deeply impressive sermon,* the historical interest of which is enhanced by the fact that Her Majesty, then the Princess Victoria, formed one of the congregation to which it was addressed. Taking his text from Isaiah xxvi. 9, "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness," the Bishop observed that the principles of Divine government revealed in Holy Scripture in reference to God's peculiar people, are applicable to all nations, and more especially to those making a profession of the Christian faith. "It has been under a conviction that such a providential interference in the state and fortunes of nations is an obvious feature of the Divine government of the world; that in all ages it is He who 'setteth up one and putteth down another,'—a conviction derived from our notions of a Providence, asserted in Scripture, and not unconfirmed by the testimony of experience,—that every people professing Christianity has from time to time made an open acknowledgment of its own connexion with the moral government of God, and of its absolute dependence upon His sovereignty, referring to His favour its remarkable preservations and successes, and to His displeasure its dangers and reverses."

After enforcing this general proposition by historical

* This sermon was never published; and the author has to acknowledge his Lordship's kindness in responding to his application for the manuscript, and for permission to make extracts from it.

examples recorded in Holy Scripture, and by express declarations of Holy Writ, as well as by arguments founded on the Omniscience and Omnipotence of God, and His general government of the universe, and at the same time guarding his hearers against the possible danger of presumption and uncharitableness in its application, the Bishop proceeded : “ And are we to be told that because other nations are not under the special and direct government of Jehovah, as the people of Israel were, they are, therefore, not under His government at all ? or, because the decrees and behests of His Sovereign Will are no longer enforced by the express sanction of temporal blessings or curses, that the prosperity and adversity of states and empires do not proceed from Him ; and that, too, upon the whole, according to the wisdom of an Omniscient Ruler, and with a view to the great ends which He has in view, the holiness and happiness of mankind ? When, in times of old, it pleased the Lord to raise up or to destroy mighty empires, with reference to their bearing upon the great work which was going on, of preparing the world for the Advent of a Saviour, was there not also a simultaneous reference to their conduct as the subjects of His moral law, and the persecutors or promoters of His true worship ? It was not only to the Jewish people that the Lord declared by the mouth of Jeremiah : ‘ At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down, and to destroy it: if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.’ And is it not most obvious that the great work which is still in progress, and to be accomplished by the instrumentality of human means, the universal diffusion of Gospel truth, and the establishment of Christ’s kingdom upon earth, must depend in a very great degree upon the agency of nations, as nations ; upon the encouragement, or opposition, given to the cause of Christianity by Govern-

ments and rulers; and upon the influence of national character, as well as of national power and wealth, over the distant, and weaker, and less enlightened tribes of the earth? Has it not been foretold of the Church of Christ, that kings shall be its 'nursing fathers, and queens its nursing mothers? And must not every sincere believer in the Gospel be persuaded, that to the paramount object of its diffusion and universal acceptance all others must be secondary? that kingdoms and commonwealths are entrusted with dominion, and blessed with prosperity, in order to forward, more or less directly, the great purposes of God in bringing all nations and languages under the dominion of His blessed Son? And if so, is it not reasonable to expect that He will advance and uphold them in proportion as they answer those purposes; or lay them aside, as useless and profitless instruments, if they do discredit to the Gospel, and retard its progress?"

In making the application of these general principles to particular events, the Bishop observed that great discrimination was necessary, seeing that success and prosperity are by no means infallible indications of the Divine approbation, whereas, of calamity and distress, it may with far greater probability be concluded that it is sent as a punishment, and at all events certainly inferred that it is not unmerited. In illustration of this view, the Bishop, in a few rapid but striking touches, reviewed the remarkable history of events then fresh in the memory of mankind, pointing out their true significance when viewed under the light thrown upon them by the torch of religion. "No person, we think, who believes that there is a Providence which concerns itself in the affairs of men, can have failed to perceive that, by the wonderful movements of that Providence, God has for some time past been speaking to the nations of the earth, and recalling them to a sense of His Supremacy. Let us attend to the circumstances of our own case. We remember the joyful exultation with

which all Europe hailed the downfall of a power which had ruled it with a rod of iron, and had watered its plains with the blood of its bravest and noblest sons ; and few were to be found who hesitated to acknowledge the justice of the Almighty in breaking down the might and repressing the pride of a nation which had disowned His Sovereignty, overturned His altars, and rejected the Gospel of His Son. Yet it is to be feared that the people who were delivered from that iron bondage, and they who, never having been subject to it themselves, were the means of delivering others, read only half the lesson which that memorable vicissitude was perhaps intended to teach them. Too intent upon the retribution which fell with astounding suddenness upon the delinquencies of other people, they overlooked their own ; and forgot that prosperity and victory might possibly have been vouchsafed to them, as instruments in the hands of an avenging God, and not as objects of favour or reward. ‘Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast the nations out from before thee, saying: For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land ; but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord hath driven them out from before thee.’

‘That this was really the case with regard to ourselves, is rendered highly probable by the consideration that our success in that long and perilous conflict, which was waged in defence of the common liberties and rights of mankind, was purchased at a price of which we hardly yet know the full amount : but this we know, and every year’s experience brings with it a bitter conviction of the truth, that our unexampled success contained within itself the germ of adversity and sorrow ; and that the exertion of a preternatural vigour developed in our constitution the principle of decay. Impoverished by victory, and oppressed with glory ; corroded internally, and in the very vitals of the body politic, by those energies which had wrought such

miracles of power, when exerted against a foreign enemy; have we not too much reason to acknowledge that the cup of our prosperity was poisoned, at the very moment when we raised it in triumph to our lips; and that, instead of seeking to cast out from it the ingredients of bitterness by careful inquiry into our real state, as a community of moral agents, responsible to the Supreme Ruler of the world, we have gone on blindly drinking it to the very dregs? Can we with any pretence of reason say that we have laboured with fearfulness and humility to improve the prosperous dispensations of Providence? and if not, have we any reason to expect that we shall be exempted from its adverse visitations?"

Pregnant words, these;—full of deep instruction as to the real character of the history of our times; as to the sense in which the events of that history should be read,—if the nation did but understand how to read them aright; words which cannot fail to strike the Christian reader as not the less pregnant nor the less instructive, when it is considered that under the reign of the Princess who sat, almost a child, at the feet of the minister of God, when he gave utterance to those solemn accents of reproof and warning, another war—that, too, “in defence of the common liberties and rights of mankind,”—has been waged, as signally successful, but marked, in the midst of success, by reverses, calamities, and humiliations as signal;—a war, to the ultimate consequences of which—bearing in mind the impoverishing effects of the victory, the oppressive glory of the triumph in which it terminated,—there is even greater cause now than there was then, to look forward with doubt and apprehension. Nor, remarkable as the words which we have quoted are, when weighed in reference to our country’s history, are they less interesting when regarded as illustrative of that singular sagacity of mind and clearness of perception in reading the signs of the times, which we have already had occasion to note

as a distinguishing feature in the character of Bishop Blomfield's mind. Gifted with a deeper insight than most men around him, into the true bearings of the events and circumstances which he was called upon to witness, and of which, by virtue of his office, he felt himself to be an authorized interpreter, he spoke and acted alternately with a hesitation which, to less thoughtful minds, assumed the appearance of shrinking, and with a boldness which astounded those who mistook his hesitation for timidity.

That boldness,—the Christian boldness of one who laboured under a deep and afflictive sense of the sins and vices of the age, and under a lively apprehension of that Divine displeasure which he felt that they merited,—was not likely to forsake him at such a season as that of national humiliation under the heavy pressure of one of God's sore judgments. Faithfully did he, on behalf of the nation and of the Church, as one of whose chief ministers he spoke, make confession of the common iniquity. "Have exertions been made," he asked,—and, assuredly, the time for asking these questions has not gone by, though a quarter of a century has elapsed since they were so asked,—“commensurate with the necessity which required them, to increase the comforts, and to improve the moral character of the poorer classes in this country? Has there been the manifestation of a more careful, and charitable, and self-denying spirit, and a more exemplary acknowledgment of the sovereignty and goodness of God on the part of those who give the tone to public opinion, and the complexion to national character? It does not become us, when all ought to bow beneath the heavy hand of God in a spirit of meekness and submission, to be casting reproaches upon one another, nor to shift from our own shoulders to those of other classes the burden of our national sins. But while every class has enough to bear in its own share of the common sinfulness, are not those classes more especially chargeable whose

example influences all the rest; who have more abundant means of knowing God, and larger opportunities of serving Him? Not to speak of the studied exclusion of religion from the ordinary intercourse of modern society, the absence of all reference to the Sovereignty of God, and the sanctions of the Gospel in our public acts of government, a reference which is now extorted from us by chastisements; not to dwell upon the shameful compromise of Christian principle, which glosses over with soft and specious terms the most flagrant offences against the law of God, and not only tolerates but admires and applauds the offender; not to insist upon the wretched perverseness which prostitutes genius, and talents, and learning to the cause of immorality and irreligion, or the avidity with which its effusions are imbibed; not to enlarge upon the ostentatious luxury, the laborious dissipation, the emulation of expense, which consume the time and faculties of the rich, and cripple their means of doing good:—I will content myself with pressing one item of self-inquiry, which, in my judgment, is of vital importance to the well-being of a state; I mean the observance of the Christian sabbath. I deem it of vital importance, not merely as being in itself the only public and common demonstration which we can give as a community, of our belief in Christianity, and especially in the great and sealing miracle of Christianity, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, of which it is the appointed memorial and solemn acknowledgment;—not only on this account, (and yet even this binds the observance of it with a sacred force of obligation upon the conscience of every Christian,) but because the neglect of it invariably leads the way to religious indifference and a disregard of moral obligation in the higher classes, to vice, and intemperance, and crime in the lower. For their own sakes, therefore, and for the sake of thousands who look up to their example, and are edified or ruined by that example, the higher

orders of society are bound, by their duty to God, by a regard for their own spiritual health, by the law of Christian charity, by the maxims of sound political wisdom, to sanctify the Lord's Day more strictly and entirely than it is wont to be sanctified by them in this country. And I feel not the least scruple in avowing my belief that the neglect of that holy and merciful institution is one of those great and crying sins of this nation, which have deserved, if they have not brought down upon it, the heavy visitation of God's wrath."

On looking back upon the aspect of the times when the Chief Pastor of the metropolitan city of this great empire thus fearlessly interpreted, within the precincts of the Royal Palace, the character and 'purpose of the visitation under which the land was groaning and trembling, we cannot but acknowledge with deep thankfulness the singular wisdom and goodness of the Sovereign Disposer of all events, in so timing the amply-merited chastisement as to render it conducive to the preservation of His Church—and not to her preservation only—but to the increase of her efficiency. With the incense of her prayers the Church stood, like Aaron of old, between the living and the dead in the day of the plague; and while addressing to Heaven her confessions and her supplications for a guilty nation, she gave, by her ministrations, both of temporal relief and of spiritual consolation, such evidence as the most obdurate minds were unable to resist, of the merciful character of her Divine mission. The cry "Down with her, down with her, even to the ground," was no longer heard in our streets; and when those on whom the guidance of her affairs at that critical period devolved, applied themselves to the task of reform, the necessity of which had, as we have seen, long been felt by men who, like Bishop Blomfield, were alive to the requirements of the age, they were neither hurried forward beyond measure by that pressure of popular opinion,

which at one time had threatened to overwhelm them, nor were they obstructed, as in less agitated times they might have been, by inertness, self-interest, and obstinate resistance to improvement. On the one hand it was felt that the attempt to maintain an attitude of unreasoning adherence to the existing state of things, would be an untenable position; on the other hand the Church had regained in the eyes both of the thinking part of the community, and of the thoughtless multitude, that standing as the Ordinance of God, without the recognition of which all true and salutary reform would have been impracticable.

That, when such a question as reform in the Established Church came once to be mooted, there should be a vast diversity of opinions, both as to the nature and extent of existing abuses and deficiencies, and as to the character of the remedies to be applied, is no more than might have been expected. To determine what course, under such circumstances, it was best and wisest to adopt, could not in any case be an easy matter; but the difficulty was seriously increased by the fact, that while the spiritual rulers of the Church were forcibly impressed with the total inadequacy of the means which the Church had at her disposal, to the religious wants of the population, political men, and among them, first and foremost, the rulers of the State, had formed the most exaggerated notions of the inordinate wealth of the Establishment. To this point, indeed, the cry for Church reform had, from the first been directed. During the worst period of the agitation incident to the struggle for Parliamentary reform, statements were propagated on this subject, the gross absurdity of which now almost provokes a smile; but which, nevertheless, did grievous mischief at the time, and contributed in no small degree to the popular "detestation" in which the episcopate was held. Among the monstrous devices resorted to for the purpose of inflaming

the popular mind, a document was published, professing to be a list of episcopal incomes, which gave, opposite to the name of each bishop, as his income, the sum total of all the preferments in his gift, in addition to the revenue of the see itself; a process by which the Archbishop of Canterbury was represented as being in the receipt of 70,000*l.* per annum, the Bishop of Winchester, 40,000*l.*, the Bishop of Durham 91,000*l.*; even such small sees as Bristol, Exeter, and Gloucester, were put down at an annual value of from 15,000*l.* to 18,000*l.*; and the poorest of all the sees, Llandaff, the annual income of which was below 1000*l.*, was made to appear as a princely dignity, worth 13,000*l.* per annum. Nor were these exaggerations confined to such libels as "the Black List," the production of an avowed atheist, disseminated among the populace; even in the House of Commons a member ventured upon the ridiculous assertion that the actual income of the see of London was 100,000*l.*; a statement which the Bishop took occasion to notice in his place in Parliament, when, after going into various particulars connected with the revenues of his see, he added: "As to the claims upon the Bishop of London, which are, I believe, always fairly answered, and will continue to be so, consistently with the character of such an office, I shall only say, that after these are answered, little will remain to enable the Bishop to provide a suitable competency for his family:"—words which, spoken at the commencement of Bishop Blomfield's London episcopate, have been strikingly verified by its close. Upon another occasion, when Lord King had indulged in one of his attacks upon the Church on the score of her exorbitant wealth, the Bishop replied:—"So far from the truth are the shameful calumnies that have been industriously spread abroad respecting the property of the Church, that if the value of all the ecclesiastical property which remains in the hands of the clergy, including the lands of the cathedrals, was

collected in one fund, and divided equally amongst the whole of the clergy, it would not afford more to each than about 350*l.* a year. Now I am sure that in the present habits of society this is not an allowance too high for men of the education and the learning for which the clergy are distinguished. I will allow that this property might admit of a better distribution, if an arrangement for that purpose could be effected consistently with respect for property, and, I will add,—though I do so with hesitation, as it may be attributed to selfishness on my part,—with respect for vested rights.” The observations thus casually elicited show what was even at that early period,—in 1830,—working in the mind of Bishop Blomfield. He had evidently considered the question of a more satisfactory application of such wealth as the Church actually possessed; he had even made calculations as to the extent of her resources; though in estimating these he himself was, as subsequent inquiries proved, considerably above the mark. The desirableness of ascertaining the real state of the case, appears to have presented itself forcibly to his mind. In the course of the observations which he addressed to the House of Lords in support of a Bill for the augmentation of small benefices, brought in by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which afterwards became law, (1 and 2 William IV. c. 45), one of the points on which he strongly dwelt, as leading him to regard the measure “with entire satisfaction,” was, that “it pointed out the propriety of an active inquiry into the state of the revenues of the Church of England. The Church of England,” the Bishop continued, “has no cause to fear a full investigation into the state of those revenues; but if she had cause to fear,—which, as I have said, she has not,—that in itself would be a sufficient reason why an inquiry should take place. Such an inquiry would prove highly beneficial, because it would tend to a just and correct notion of the real condition of the ecclesiastical funds,

instead of views founded upon those most preposterous and exaggerated statements which are daily put forth on this subject, — statements which, though frequently rebutted, still continue to be repeated, and can never be put down but by a full investigation into all the minutest details of the subject, such as I trust will take place under this Bill. When that investigation shall have been prosecuted, I confidently assert that it will turn out that the property of the Church does not reach one-third of the amount at which it has been stated.

“Another great advantage that will be derived from this sort of inquiry, will be, that it will form the groundwork of a more equal distribution of the ecclesiastical revenues; a distribution, the existing defects of which, during a period of many centuries, have grown up into a system that may be inconsistent with the true interests of the Church; but these defects, I may be permitted to observe, are anomalies to which all human institutions are liable, and which, by a proper examination of their causes, may be removed. When it shall once be seen by the country at large that an inquiry has been made into the condition of these revenues, I am satisfied that no niggardly jealousy will be displayed as respects a proper provision for the ministers of the Established Church; but on the contrary, that there will be a strong desire on the part of the public to recognize and hold inviolate the property belonging to her. My Lords, such a result I desire to witness; and I feel assured that all that the people of England require to see is, that a more equal distribution of the revenues of the Church be made; and this, I am confident can take place without interfering with the property of the ecclesiastical establishment.”

These remarks may be said to contain the germ of the measures of financial reform subsequently effected by means of the Ecclesiastical Commission; and however opinions may differ as to the propriety and expediency of

some of those measures, there can be no doubt that on the part of the episcopate, and especially on the part of Bishop Blomfield, who took throughout a prominent and active part in them, they originated not in a mere anxiety to silence popular clamour, but in a sincere desire to make the property of the Church more fully available for those sacred purposes to which it was devoted by its founders. Among the considerations that weighed most strongly with Bishop Blomfield, to induce him to favour plans for the more equal distribution of Church property, as far as could be done consistently with the interests of the Church herself, were the evils resulting from the inadequate provision made for the maintenance of the parochial clergy. "I admit," he said, in the course of one of the incidental debates which took place on this subject every now and then in Parliament, "that the poorer benefices are a blot on the Established Church, which I sincerely trust will be alleviated, if not entirely removed. I am aware that one of the greatest blessings to the Church would be to increase the comforts and respectability of the poorer members of the clergy; but that must be done without the risk of weakening the efficiency of the Establishment as a whole." So earnestly bent was Bishop Blomfield on the attainment of this object, that he made no scruple of avowing that he did not altogether view with dissatisfaction the impulse which the question of financial Church reform had received from political causes. Being tauntingly asked by the Duke of Newcastle, "whether the reform of the Church of England had commenced," he replied that "it had begun and had been going on for many years; but that it had been accelerated by recent events, and he trusted it would be still further accelerated."





CHAPTER IX.

Ecclesiastical Commission of Inquiry—Statistical Results of the Inquiry—Different Classes of Ecclesiastical Property—Aggregate Amounts—Charges upon Clerical Revenues—Principles of Financial Church Reform—Schemes of Spoliation—Their Iniquity Demonstrated—Insufficiency of the Property of the Church for the Maintenance of the Clergy—Inadequacy of the Numbers of the Clergy to the Spiritual Wants of the Country—Deficiency of Means of Grace in the Metropolis—The Manufacturing Districts—Duty and Interest of the State—The Question of an Establishment—Its Necessity to the Maintenance of National Religion—Sermons on the Uses of a Standing Ministry—The Parochial Clergyman—His Action and his Influence—Instructive Example of America—What England would become without her Clergy—Necessity of State Assistance—Spoliation of Former Ages—The Marquis of Tavistock and Bishop Blomfield—Duty of the Great Impropriators—"Real Church Reform"—Insuperable Difficulties—Bishop Blomfield's Views—Practicable and Salutary Measures—New Ecclesiastical Commission—Change of Ministry—Its Effect upon the Ecclesiastical Commission—Pledge given by Lord Melbourne—Violation of the Pledge—Differences among the Commissioners—The Ecclesiastical Commission Bill.

THE first official step towards a redistribution of ecclesiastical property was taken in 1832, when, on the 23rd of June, a Royal Commission was appointed, "to make a full and correct inquiry respecting the revenues and patronage belonging to the several archiepiscopal and episcopal sees, to all cathedral and collegiate churches, and to all ecclesiastical benefices (including donatives, perpetual curacies and chapelries) with or without cure of souls in England and Wales, and the

names of the several persons thereof, and other circumstances therewith connected." The Commissioners charged with this preliminary inquiry consisted of six prelates, among whom were the two Archbishops and the Bishop of London; five other dignitaries of the Church; the Dean of the Arches; two of the Common Law Judges; and nine other laymen, among them the Marquis of Lansdowne, President of the Council, the Earl of Harrowby, and Sir Robert H. Inglis. The inquiry was necessarily a protracted one, and the Commission had to be renewed for two successive years before it was enabled to present to the Crown, and through it to Parliament, a digest of the information which it had collected. This digest consisted of four tabular statements, exhibiting, respectively, the gross, net, and estimated revenues of the archiepiscopal and episcopal sees; those of the cathedral and collegiate churches; those of the separate estates of the spiritual members of cathedral and collegiate bodies; and those of parochial and other benefices, with or without cure of souls. The result at once showed how erroneous was the estimate which had been formed of the wealth of the Church. The aggregate net income of all the archiepiscopal and episcopal sees put together, was found to be only 160,292*l.*; that of the cathedral and collegiate churches 208,289*l.*; that of the separate estates of members of those bodies, 75,854*l.*; and that of 10,540 benefices, 3,004,721*l.*; making a total of less than three and a half millions; whilst the number of parochial clergy alone, including curates, was near upon 16,000 :* so that,

* The total number of benefices was found to be 10,718, of which returns were obtained from 10,540. The number of sinecure rectories did not exceed 66, of which 62, from which returns were made, possessed an aggregate annual revenue of 17,095*l.*, or below 300*l.* on an average. Besides the incumbents of the benefices, the value of which averaged 285*l.*, there were 1006 curates of resident, and 4,224 of non-resident incumbents, the stipends of the former averaging 86*l.*, those of the latter 79*l.* per annum.

upon an equal distribution of the whole of the revenues of the Church among every class of spiritual persons, from the archbishop down to the lowest curate, the average would not have amounted to more than 220*l.* per annum. With regard to the cathedral bodies, the Commissioners bore honourable testimony to the liberality evinced by several of them in voluntarily giving up a portion of their revenues for purposes of a charitable nature, and for the repair and embellishment of the sacred edifices under their charge ; and in reference to the last-named point, they expressed their opinion that a larger sum had been expended since the year 1800, in the restoration and repair of cathedral churches, than had been laid out upon the same objects during the whole of the preceding century. "Before we conclude our Report," the Commissioners added, "we deem it incumbent upon us to observe, that the expenses bearing upon the incomes of the clergy, of every class, are by no means confined to those already enumerated. The archbishops and bishops, in addition to the payment of fees, first fruits and other charges, incident to their taking possession of their preferments, are subject to heavy expenses for the support and reparation of their houses of residence. All the beneficed clergy are liable, in a greater or less degree, to similar charges. On the archdeacons, who are among the most useful and efficient officers of the Church, the supervision of their archdeaconries, sometimes extending over a very large territory, entails, in many cases, an expenditure exceeding the whole emoluments of their office ; and their costs and charges for first-fruits and fees of admission generally exceed the amount of their receipts for the first two or three years after their entering into office. This last observation," the report adds, "applies to many prebendaries and other dignitaries of cathedral and collegiate churches."

While this Commission was prosecuting its inquiries

into the materials for future legislation, the principles by which that legislation was to be guided, naturally occupied the minds of those who had the cause of safe and effective Church reform at heart. What were the views of Bishop Blomfield, we learn from the observations made by him in his second Charge to the Clergy of his diocese, delivered in July, 1834, in which he discussed the whole question of Church property, and of the right and proper mode of dealing with it, having regard to the spiritual necessities of the country, at considerable length. In reference to the schemes of spoliation which were avowed by the more advanced section of Church reformers, the Bishop put the argument thus pointedly:—"Let us imagine for a moment, that an attempt were made to interfere, by legislative enactment, with all the wills, and trust-deeds, which secure a certain amount of property to various places of dissenting worship throughout the country; and to appropriate the whole, or a part of that property, to secular purposes; or even to the object of general education; that so full scope and freedom might be given to the voluntary system, to put forth all its energies, unembarrassed and unimpeded by the unholy incumbrance of worldly possessions. What a clamour would be raised, and justly raised, against such an attempt, not only by the ministers and trustees of particular chapels, but by the great body of the dissenters! With what force of language, and strength of reasoning, would they point out the injustice and impolicy of such an invasion of the rights of property, especially where the interests of religious truth are concerned! And I would gladly learn, whether the case which I have here supposed, differs in principle from the projected spoliation of the Established Church; or whether it differs at all, except in this, that it would be a far less flagrant, a less extensive, a less mischievous departure from all the acknowledged rules of honesty, and equity, and justice."

In answer to those who, while admitting the principle of

endowment in the abstract, contended that the English Establishment was too richly endowed, the Bishop appealed to the facts which had then already been ascertained and proved by figures the illusory character of the notions popularly entertained as to the wealth of the Church. Calculating the results of a general equalization of ecclesiastical incomes, and confining himself to the benefices alone, he showed that if the aggregate amount of all the benefices in England and Wales were equally distributed among the 10,701 livings, the income of each would not be more than 285*l.*; and that the absorption and equal distribution among the parochial clergy of the whole of the revenues of the Bishops, the Cathedral bodies, and other ecclesiastical corporations, would net raise this average above 326*l.*; "an amount," the Bishop observed, "barely exceeding that which, by almost common consent, has been fixed upon as the *minimum* of provision for a well-educated man, set apart for the work of the ministry, and cut off from all other sources of emolument."

Having thus proved, in the most conclusive manner, that the pecuniary resources of the Established Church were not only not superabundant, but insufficient, for the support of the parochial clergy, even under existing arrangements, the Bishop proceeded to point out, again upon the ground of facts which had been ascertained by the inquiries of the Commission, how exceedingly short these arrangements fell of the actual wants of the population. "Even were we to admit," he said, "that any thing like an equalization of Church property would be beneficial—and I am persuaded that it would be most injurious to the interests of religion in this country—still, it would be a very limited and insufficient view of the question, to regard it only as it concerns the existing number of incumbent clergymen. If the revenues of the English Church were large enough to afford a liberal maintenance to every incumbent, they would still not be so

large as the spiritual exigencies of the country require. The people are not adequately supplied with the means and opportunities of Christian instruction and Christian worship. We want more churches, and more clergymen. Take an instance of this. In the eastern and north-eastern districts of the metropolis, there are ten parishes, containing together a population of 353,460 persons. In these parishes there are 18 churches and chapels, served by 24 incumbents and curates; the average being not quite one church or chapel for every 19,000 souls, and one clergyman for every 14,000. Whereas, allowing a church and two clergymen for every 3,000 persons, there ought to be 117 churches, and 234 clergymen. So that there is an actual deficiency of 99 churches and 210 ministers in that one part of a single diocese.

"In Lancashire, and the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire, and in parts of Staffordshire, the disproportion between the demand for spiritual instruction, or rather, I should say, the want of spiritual instruction, and the supply, is not less striking and lamentable. The truth is, that we are doing, or attempting to do, the work of evangelists, for a population of more than 14 millions, with a machinery originally constructed for a very small portion of that number. If the population and the clergy were equally distributed over the whole superficial territory of the Church, that machinery would not be sufficient for more than 11 millions, allowing each clergyman to have the care of 1000 souls: but its insufficiency appears in a still stronger light, when we consider the extremely unequal distribution of the machinery over the surface upon which it is intended to operate."

The facts thus lucidly presented by the Bishop,—whose statements on the subject were fully borne out by the official report published early in the following year,—would have abundantly justified an appeal to the State in

its corporate capacity, to step forward, and,—if not in the interest of religion and of the Church, at least in the interest of civil society, of which religion is not only the strongest but the only safe and permanent guarantee,—to provide funds for putting the national Church into a condition of thorough efficiency, on a footing commensurate with the spiritual wants of the population. That it was the interest of the State to do so, on the simple ground that without the aid of an Established Church the religious instruction of the population cannot be provided for with any degree of certainty or regularity, no man understood better than Bishop Blomfield. The question, “Ought there to be an Established Church?” is one to which he was at no loss to find an answer. In the Charge from which we have already quoted, he adverted to it, observing that it was “plainly to be determined by the solution of another, Is the legal establishment of any form of Christianity calculated to promote, or impede the moral and spiritual improvement of a people? There being,” he continued, “no express prohibition of a religious establishment in the Word of God, the question, about which so much unnecessary discussion has been wasted, whether such an establishment be scriptural or not, resolves itself into another, Whether an establishment be fitted to advance the great objects for which the Scriptures have been given to mankind? If it be fitted to advance those ends, it is scriptural, as well as useful and expedient; and the whole controversy is really reducible to a single topic of debate, whether the religious instruction of a nation be not most effectually carried on by means of an endowed and established Church? We maintain, that not only is it most efficiently carried on by that instrumentality, but that, with respect to the country at large, it would not be carried on at all without it. Our large towns, indeed, and populous districts, might perhaps be provided with a precarious supply of Christian teaching and minis-

trations by the voluntary benevolence of pious persons, associated in sufficient numbers for the purpose ; but the rural population of our villages and hamlets, scattered by thousands over the surface of the land, would be left almost, if not altogether, unsupplied with the means of grace and edification. I might put it to the common sense and honesty of many of the laity who now hear me, whether their own parishes would have any regular supply of Christian ministration and instruction, if there were no legal provision for upholding a church and maintaining a clergyman ? But I forbear from dwelling upon this obvious truth ; it is now beginning to be generally understood and acknowledged. The subject has of late been thoroughly canvassed ; and the more searchingly the claims of the Established Church are examined, the more indisputable will they appear to be, on the score of usefulness, as well as on the higher grounds of its apostolic derivation and authority."

Still more fully did the Bishop enter into the argument in two sermons "On the Uses of a Standing Ministry and an Established Church," published about this time, for the purpose of calling attention to the importance, even in a civil and political point of view, of maintaining the religious establishment of the country in a state of efficiency. "The strongest argument," he said, in the second of those sermons, after adducing various other arguments to show how necessary the agency of a Church is to the maintenance of religion among a people, "for an Established Church is this : that it is the only, or at any rate the most efficient, instrument of instructing the people in the doctrines of religion, and of habituating them to its decencies and restraints. In no other way is it possible to make a thoroughly effectual provision for the spiritual instruction and moral improvement of a whole people. If any impression is to be made on the mass of ignorance and irreligion, which not only prevails where

large bodies of men are congregated in one locality, but which rapidly spreads and thickens over every district from which the active ministry of the Word is withdrawn, it must be made by men specially appointed to the work, stationed at intervals throughout the country, and secured by a competent provision from a servile dependence upon the people whom they are to teach. It is unhappily too certain that the great bulk of mankind, if left entirely to themselves, would never seek for religious instruction, or at least would never put themselves to much trouble or expense to procure it. The appetite for the soul's spiritual food does not exist in the unconverted man, but must be first excited and then supplied. But this can never be effected on an extensive scale, by the desultory efforts of occasional teachers, unconnected, by local associations and sympathies, with the flock of whom they can hardly be said to have the oversight; nor in any other way than by the stated and systematic instruction of authorized ministers, residing in the midst of their people; diligently sowing the seed of God's Word, not merely at certain fixed times, but at every opportunity which the varying circumstances of life may present; promoting and superintending the Christian education of the young; conciliating respect to their spiritual office and counsels by kind and friendly though not obtrusive attention to the personal interests of their hearers; and recommending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God by a daily exemplification, in their own conduct, of the sanctifying blessedness of Christian principles. From such a provision as this, when faithfully applied to the objects for which it is intended, results may be expected which cannot possibly be produced by the mere periodical and cursory teaching of persons unconnected by official ties with the place where their ministry is exercised; bound to no uniform standard of doctrine or formularies of devotion; and supported only by the voluntary offerings of

those who, if they are to be made wise unto salvation, must be brought to hear with meekness many unpalatable truths, and to bear rebuke and reproof as well as to receive encouragement and consolation.

“Surely it is not possible to estimate at too high a rate the moral influence which is exerted by a well-educated and pious man, stationed in the midst of a poor unenlightened population, labouring solely for their good, advising, warning, comforting them; moving amongst them as a messenger of love and help; penetrating the obscurest recesses of indigence and misery; inquiring with tenderness and delicacy into their wants and woes, and devising methods for their relief; assisting, superintending, perhaps conducting, the education of their children; contriving and facilitating methods of economy and humble independence; ministering to them the blessings of religion at the most interesting and most solemn moments of their lives; admitting them when infants into the Church of Christ; preparing them at a riper age for a profitable participation in its ordinances; blessing in God’s name those whom God has joined together; interceding for them, and consoling them in their hours of sickness and sorrow; praising the Lord for His mercies towards them, when they are raised from the gates of the grave; and at last, when their course is finished, and the joys and troubles of life are over, commending their souls into the hands of a merciful Redeemer, and restoring their bodies to their kindred dust with solemn words of valediction.

“Suppose a person such as we have now described, to be stationed in every parish and district,—and we have a right, in arguing this question, to assume that state of things which the Church intends, and would if possible bring to pass,—suppose the whole land to be thus sentinelled with faithful, able, exemplary watchmen of the Lord, (and this can only be by means of an Established Church), and then ask of yourselves whether anything

could make amends for the loss of such a powerful and effective machinery for improving both the moral and social condition of the people? That there is, in fact, nothing which could supply its place, we may learn from the example of America. In that country, the great body of the people are left to provide and maintain their own religious teachers: and the consequence is, that great numbers are without any teachers at all, or at least without any who deserve the name; and that vast districts are, to all appearance, sinking into heathenism; no public honour paid to God's holy name, no Sabbath observances, no solemn forms of worship, no stated exposition of Scripture, no ministerial oversight nor guidance,—not for want of men who are ready to enter upon a field of labour the most unpromising, if a bare subsistence were provided for them, but because the people will not be at the cost of their maintenance, nor of churches for them to preach in. Such we are verily persuaded is the state of things into which our own country would gradually verge, if its national Church were subverted; and this surely is a state of things, the bare possibility of which may well inspire a dread of such an experiment into the minds of those who desire the happiness and prosperity of their country, and who are persuaded that without religion, that is, without Christianity, no people can be really happy, or permanently prosperous. Deprive the nation of its regular clergy, take from them the moderate endowments which are left them out of the spoils of a far wealthier Church, and what will you effect?—the transfer of those endowments from those who earn them by a faithful discharge of the most important duties, to those who are not bound to the performance of any. But you will do more than this: you will shut up in many a village and hamlet of our land, not only the parsonage, but the school, and the dispensary; the local centre and shrine of knowledge, and charity, and sympathy, and order;

and you will leave the people, without any antagonist principle to counteract the workings of a corrupt nature, acted upon at every moment by all the elements of disorder and confusion, and driven to and fro by every gust of wild opinion and fanatical impiety. Such are the main outlines of the argument by which we prove the necessity of an Established Church as a security for the continuance and propagation of true religion, as an instrument incomparably more potent and effective than any other, for diffusing amongst the people a knowledge of those truths, and a respect for those principles, which are the only sure basis of morality, the only sufficient motives to uprightness and charity, and therefore the only certain pledge of national peace and safety."

From the premises thus furnished by Bishop Blomfield himself,—on the one hand, the indispensable necessity of the agency of an Established Church for the maintenance of national religion,—on the other hand, the demonstrable insufficiency of the pecuniary resources at the disposal of the Church for bringing that agency efficiently to bear upon the population,—the conclusion appears inevitable, that the true remedy called for by the condition of the Church, relatively to the population, was a deliberate representation to the State, founded upon the facts elicited by the inquiries of the Church Commission, of its duty as well as interest in this matter. The Church would have been justified in calling upon the State to find the means necessary for giving the fullest efficiency to her parochial system in every part of the country, and especially amongst those dense masses of population which, in all the large towns and in the manufacturing districts, had altogether outgrown the provisions made for the spiritual wants of the people in bygone times. In order to obtain at the hands of the State a dispassionate, and eventually a favourable consideration, such a representation

must, indeed, have been accompanied by an expression of willingness on the part of the Church to make her own resources available to the utmost extent compatible with the preservation of her internal organization. And since that willingness evidently existed, on the part of those, at least, who represented the Church in this matter, it could hardly have been considered unreasonable or unjust, if they had made their concurrence in the sweeping measures applied to the property of the Church conditional upon the performance by the State of that part of the common duty which devolved upon it by every rule of right reason and sound policy.

Nor were other arguments wanting to the Church to support such a demand. Her present poverty was the result of the ruthless spoliation of former ages; a point which was remarkably well put by Bishop Blomfield at this very time in reply to an attack made upon the Church in the House of Lords by the Marquis of Tavistock. That noble scion of a house enriched by the spoils of the Church having "called the attention of the House" to what he termed "the necessity of effecting a safe and salutary reform of the acknowledged great abuses which existed in the establishment of the Church of England, especially with respect to non-residents and pluralities," the Bishop of London,—who, in concert with the Archbishop of Canterbury, had already done much, and, but for the obstruction of their measures by the House of Commons, would have done more, to remedy these evils as far as possible,—gave the discussion a turn upon which his assailant had not at all calculated. "Pluralities," said the Bishop, "are an abuse which we have inherited from the Papal dominion, and their continuance has been rendered absolutely necessary by the continuance of one of the greatest abuses possible,—that of impropriations. No one can have a clearer perception of what I mean than the Noble Marquis. I hope that he will not take me to be

offensive, when I say, that it is impossible to do away with pluralities without doing away with impropriations; that it is impossible to insure competent instruction for each parish throughout the country, unless the means requisite for that purpose be provided; and I know no means of doing that, except those which might be devised, if the great impropiators were to come forward and contribute their share towards the accomplishment of the desired object. That, indeed, would be a real reform."

A real reform,—such a reform as would have insured a due provision for the religious wants of the country, was possible only by the concurrent action of the Church and the State; not by the State calling upon the Church, and compelling her, to make sacrifices; but by the State going hand in hand with the Church in making the sacrifices which the common good required. No such reform, however, was thought of. The question was narrowed into a mere inquiry as to the appropriation of existing ecclesiastical funds; all that the Church ventured to do was to deprecate, in a half apologetic tone, a too abrupt or sweeping interference with those funds. That the truer and larger view of the subject presented itself to the mind of Bishop Blomfield, it is impossible to doubt; nor can it be supposed for a moment that if he had seen his way to press upon the State the demand for effective assistance which the Church had a right to make, he would not willingly have done so. That he did not do so, but acquiesced in the one-sided plans of Church reform of which eventually the Ecclesiastical Commission became the main instrument, proves that,—right or wrong,—he felt the difficulties in the way of "real reform" to be insuperable. The conclusions at which he had arrived as to what was practicable, were thus explained by himself in his second Charge:—

"I do not intend to say that the Church possesses no resources at all within itself, from which that deficiency

may be, in part at least, supplied ; and it has in fact been, to a certain extent, supplied, partly by the liberality of associated churchmen, and partly by the Government of the country, in supplying means for the erection, I wish I could say the endowment, of many new churches and chapels, and for the enlargement of many others : in this one diocese, 64 new churches and chapels have been consecrated within the last twenty years ; but until the deficiency has been *completely* supplied, let us not be told of the redundant means of the Establishment. It may be a fit subject of consideration, whether a part of those means might not be advantageously directed into new channels, and made to fertilize some of the waste places of the land : but that the smallest portion of them can be spared from their legitimate purposes, and equitably, or honestly applied to any other objects, is what we peremptorily and earnestly deny. It is undoubtedly incumbent upon us to do all in our power to render the Established Church efficient in the highest possible degree ; and if any changes can be made in the actual distribution of its resources, which would have a clear and unquestionable tendency to increase its usefulness, and which are not inconsistent with the fundamental principles of its polity, we ought surely to carry them into effect, even if it be at the expense of some of those ornamental parts of the system, which have their uses, and those by no means unimportant ; yet not so important as that they should be suffered to stand in the way of improvements calculated to enhance and give lustre to the true beauty of the Church—the beauty of its holy usefulness.

“ I have long entertained and avowed an opinion that some such changes are practicable. I do not indeed think it would be easy to devise any *one* comprehensive scheme of improvement, equally applicable to all parts of the kingdom ; nor do I believe that the experiment can be made with any prospect of success, or with safety to the Church, except after a very careful and minute inquiry into the cir-

cumstances of every diocese, with reference to the wants of its inhabitants, and the means which it contains within itself, of supplying those wants, without anything like a breaking up of the ancient framework of our polity.

“*Some* alterations ought, in my opinion, to be made, in the present arrangement of certain parts of the property belonging to the Church, in order to render it more available than it now is, to the general diffusion of those benefits which an Established Church is intended to convey to the people at large; and if, as I am persuaded is the case, they can be made with perfect safety to the Establishment itself, I hope we shall not be deterred from adopting them by the unreasonable clamours of our adversaries, nor by the hasty and officious zeal of some of our friends. Let us rather be desirous of making those well-considered and salutary amendments which may take away from the one an occasion of cavil and reproach, and satisfy the reasonable wishes of the other, in a manner consistent with the stability and honour of the Church. We shall do wisely, I think, in availing ourselves of a respite from imminent danger, to go round our bulwarks, and mark the defects thereof, with a view to their restoration; and to place our outworks at least in a state of defence, even though the citadel itself may need no substantial repair.”

The year following that in which this Charge was delivered, was marked not only by the appearance of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry, which had been at work for three years, but by the constitution of a new Commission with extended powers. This new Commission was, in the first instance, appointed with the full concurrence of the Bishops, under the administration of Sir Robert Peel, who, on his accession to office, put himself in communication with the Archbishop upon the state and prospects of the Church. By the terms of its appointment, the Commissioners were “to consider the state of the several

dioceses in England and Wales, with reference to the amount of their revenues, and the more equal distribution of episcopal duties, and the prevention of the necessity of attaching by commendam to bishoprics benefices with cure of souls; also, the state of the several cathedral and collegiate churches in England and Wales, with a view to the suggestion of such measures as may render them conducive to the efficiency of the Established Church; and to devise the best mode of providing for the cure of souls, with special reference to the residence of the clergy on their respective benefices."

Neither to the terms of the Commission, nor to its composition, was any objection made at the time. But within a few months of its appointment a change of Government took place, which materially affected the character of the Commission, and the probable tendency of its action. The result cannot be better stated than in the Bishop's own words in his Charge of 1838, when, in the course of an elaborate vindication of its proceedings, or rather of his own share in those proceedings, he gave the following account of the matter: "Upon Sir Robert Peel's retirement from office the proceedings of the Commission were for a time suspended: but as soon as Lord Melbourne had settled the new Administration, he made known to the Archbishop the wish of the Government that the Commission should be renewed, with the change of those Commissioners only, who had been members of the late Administration. Before the other Commissioners acceded to this proposal, they required a pledge from the Prime Minister, that they should be suffered to proceed on the same principles, and with the same views, which had been originally contemplated; and that no measure affecting the property of the Church should be introduced into Parliament, with the consent or sanction of the Government, pending the inquiries of the Commission, except such as should consist with their recommendations.

“That pledge was given. Without it, the other members of the Commission would certainly have declined continuing to act : but having received it, they did not consider themselves at liberty to retire from the performance of the task which they had undertaken, the object of their appointment being unchanged, and the principles upon which they had up to that time proceeded, being distinctly recognized by the Government, as those by which their future deliberations were to be shaped.

“The new Commission was accordingly issued ; and the inquiries, which had been for a short time suspended, were resumed. ‘Unanimity,’ as it was stated by the Archbishop,* ‘prevailed in the proceedings of the Commission. Whenever there was a difference of opinion on any material point, it was settled, not by a reluctant or unwilling compromise or concession on either side, but after a full consideration of the facts, and discussion of the reasons upon which the matter turned.’ This statement, which is strictly true with regard to all the recommendations of the Commission, is a sufficient answer to the insinuations which have been thrown out, that the Commissioners did little more than adopt, without inquiry or deliberation, the propositions made by one or two of their body.

“The unanimity which is described as having been the result of full and free discussion, continued up to the time when the Ministers took measures for bringing the question of Church property, belonging to Bishops, Deans and Chapters, before a Committee of the House of Commons, with the avowed intention of applying a part of it, in case an improved value should be given to it, as a substitute for Church rates. This being regarded as a distinct and unequivocal violation of the pledge given by the Government to the Commissioners who had consented to resume their office in the new Commission, they announced to the Prime Minister that they could no longer continue to take

* In his place in Parliament.

part in measures, the very ground of which was taken away by the proceedings of the Government in the House of Commons. Their fourth report, which had been agreed to, was never signed; and they are, therefore, strictly speaking, not answerable for the Bill grounded upon that report, which has since been brought into Parliament, but with some important additions,* at variance with the report itself, and with the principles which its framers had kept steadily in view."

* The Commissioners' recommendation extended no further than to the appointment of a Commission which might from time to time under the sanction of the King in Council, carry out the details of the arrangements contemplated in their report. A material change was made in the character of the body so contemplated, by the constitution of the Commission into a body corporate, capable of holding lands, tenements, and hereditaments. This change was made by the Government at the suggestion of the law-officers of the Crown, and the Ecclesiastical Commission of Inquiry was in no way responsible for it.





CHAPTER X.

Results of the Ecclesiastical Commission—Regulation of Episcopal Incomes—Re-arrangement of Dioceses—The Metropolitan Diocese—Selfishness of the Cathedral Bodies—Objections to their Reduction—Small Results of the Commission in providing for the Parochial Clergy—Corporate Character of the Commission—Dangers to the Church from its Constitution—Bishop Blomfield's Expectations from the State—Disappointment of his Hopes—Attack upon the Irish Church—The Irish Church Temporalities Act—Bill for the Extermination of Protestants in Ireland—Eloquent Remonstrance of Bishop Blomfield—The Plea of Necessity—The Pacification of Ireland—Dangers to the Protestant Faith—Solemn Obligation of the Act of Union—Popish Designs—Impolicy of Concession—Success of the Opposition—Temporal Possessions of the Church—Her Spiritual Interests—Self Devotion and Disinterestedness of Her Clergy—The Great End of the Church—Season of Peril—Exhortation to Prayer and to Unity of Spirit.

SO far the history of the Ecclesiastical Commission as given by Bishop Blomfield. As regards the practical results produced by that Commission, a detailed examination of them would be alike beyond the scope and the limits of the present pages. The more important of the changes which it effected in the position of the episcopate, and the arrangement of the dioceses, have not stood the test of experience. The plan adopted for the regulation of episcopal incomes has given rise to grave

scandals in some cases, in others to unjust and cruel imputations. The addition of two new sees can hardly be considered as more than a small instalment of that increase of the episcopate, which the spiritual necessities of the Church urgently demand. The union of some of the old sees, by means of which the creation of two new ones was eked out, has in one instance been prevented by the active opposition of the Church, and of the dioceses concerned; and in the other case has quite recently, on the avoidance of the united see, been made the subject of an earnest protest against its continuance. And among the other territorial changes made at the suggestion of the Commission, it is a fact worthy of notice, that before the incorporation of those of the metropolitan parishes which are situated in the diocese of Winchester, with the diocese of London, could take effect, Bishop Blomfield himself, who had this concentration of the whole metropolis and its suburbs much at heart, has sunk under the weight of the duties which his gigantic charge imposed upon him; and whatever may be, at this moment, the views and intentions of the Government, it is evident to all who are acquainted with the diocese, that its subdivision, at no distant day, is a matter of absolute necessity.

The changes which the Commission made in the cathedral establishments, can scarcely be considered as more satisfactory. That many of the objections raised against the propositions of the Commissioners by the cathedral bodies themselves were prompted by a narrow and selfish spirit, cannot, we fear, be denied. More especially this remark applies to the refusal of the cathedral bodies to accede to the arrangement proposed by the Commission, that such portions of their patronage as remained unappropriated after providing the members of the chapter and the subordinate clergy attached to the cathedral with preferment, should be transferred to the Bishop, to be administered

by him under certain regulations and limitations, so as to ensure its becoming the means of rewarding meritorious clergymen of the diocese : a refusal which was all the more reprehensible, because the bishops themselves had set the example of a large sacrifice of their own patronage consequent upon the reduction of cathedral dignities ; and the retention of the same amount of patronage in the hands of the corporations, notwithstanding the reduction of their members, resulted, in fact, in giving to the individuals composing them an increase of patronage. But although the opposition of the cathedral bodies had in its motives little to recommend it, and although the spirit and tone in which that opposition was in some notable instances conducted, might indeed raise a laugh, but never can have the sympathy of earnest churchmen, there are strong reasons, nevertheless, for regretting the course which was pursued in paring down the cathedral establishments. If, instead of being reduced to mere skeletons, these corporations had been made available for the performance of those services which they are so eminently calculated to render,—among which we need only mention those two all-important objects, theological training for the ministry, and the supervision of the education of the middle and lower classes,—their revenues would have been applied in a manner as useful, to say the least of it, to the Church, as they have been by their appropriation to other purposes than those contemplated by their founders, albeit purposes, on the whole, of a kindred nature.

That the parochial necessities of the Church,—the want of churches, and the want of an adequate support for the clergy,—have not been relieved to any appreciable extent is notorious. In this particular, which after all was the main object for which the Commission was instituted, and the chief plea for so sweeping an interference with ecclesiastical property,—the Ecclesiastical Commission has proved a failure ; nor does there appear any prospect that it

ever will come up to the sanguine expectations which were at one time entertained as to the results of its operations.*

* By the seventh General Report of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners it appears that the total amount of permanent charge upon the funds of the Commission for augmentation of poor livings, and endowment of new districts, to the 1st of November, 1854, was 80,712*l.* per annum; viz. 46,339*l.* for the augmentation of 856 benefices, with an aggregate population of 2,346,535; and 34,373*l.* for the endowment of 242 new districts (189 of which were provided with churches), with an aggregate population of 854,870. The annual expenses of administration, by means of which this small addition to the incomes of the parochial clergy was obtained, are thus returned to Parliament for the years 1853 and 1854:—

	1852—3.			1853—4.		
	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Solicitors . . .	5,020	15	4	5,773	18	6
Surveyors . . .	6,116	10	3	6,052	7	6
Receivers . . .	2,433	14	8	3,204	14	1
	<hr/> £13,570 19 10			<hr/> £15,031 0 1		

During the progress of these pages through the press, a document has been issued by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, in which they announce their intention, in consequence of the smallness of their annual surplus, and the improbability of any material increase, to abandon the system of permanent augmentation altogether, and to confine themselves to grants of sums not exceeding 600*l.* for each benefice, which sums, being met by benefactions of at least equal amount, are to be invested as capital, and the interest to be applied in augmentation of such benefices. In further illustration of the gain to the cause of Church extension from the concentration of Church property in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the Earl of Hanowby, being asked early in the present Session (1857) whether it was the intention of the Government to provide increased funds for necessitous parishes containing large masses of population, replied, that “he could not say that the Government were prepared to bring in any measure this year for the endowment of poor parishes. The only fund applicable to that purpose was the fund in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners: an additional sum of £5000 (!!) would be at the disposal of the Commissioners this year, for the relief of such cases.”

The Ecclesiastical Commission itself, in the new form which was given to it by the Act of 1836, is justly considered in the light of an anomaly, and a danger to the Church. The concentration of the property of the Church in the hands of a corporation closely connected with, and subject to the control of, the Government, affords facilities of spoliation which in evil times may seriously compromise its security.* Bishop Blomfield, who, with his episcopal brother Commissioners was not, be it remembered, in any way responsible for this new development of its character, "frankly confessed" in his Charge to his clergy in 1838, that as then constituted by Act of Parliament, it was open to objection, and calculated to provoke a just jealousy. But whatever may be the light in which the Ecclesiastical Commission itself, and the changes which it has effected in the Church, are regarded by different minds, that body has become so interwoven with the whole organization of the Church, as to have, its objectionable character notwithstanding, become one of her regular institutions, and the prospect of her ever being emancipated from its grasp is slender indeed.

This result is the more to be deplored, because no compensation has been made to the Church, or, rather, to the cause of religion, on the part of the State, for the sacrifices exacted from the Church. The hope which, it appears, Bishop Blomfield cherished at the time, that on the Church doing her duty in the matter, the State would follow her example, has hitherto been disappointed.† "It is urged,"

* This objection was raised by Sir Robert H. Inglis on the introduction of the Bill into the House of Commons. "My principal objection to the Bill," said the Honourable Baronet, "is, that it proposes to divest the Bishops of the Established Church of their character of great and independent proprietors, and to render them stipendiary to the State." The same objection was taken in the House of Lords by the Bishop of Exeter.

† By a return moved for by Mr. Hume, in 1840, it appears that the total amount of State assistance given to the Church of England

said the Bishop, in his Charge of 1838, "that instead of touching the property of the chapters, we should claim from the legislature whatever aid may be required for the purpose of enabling the Church to answer the demand for additional clergymen, which is made on behalf of a destitute population. No person is more ready than I am, boldly to assert the duty incumbent upon the Government of a Christian country, to make an adequate provision for the religious instruction of the people, and to supply them

since 1801, consisted of a sum of one million sterling, issued to the Church Building Commissioners, pursuant to the Act 58 Geo. III., c. 45; and half a million pursuant to the Act 5 Geo. IV., c. 103; and an annual grant of 100,000*l.* to the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty from 1809 to 1816, and from 1818 to 1820, inclusive. When, in 1843, an Act, introduced by Sir Robert Peel, was passed, to give facilities for the endowment of ministers in populous districts having no church or other consecrated place of worship, the money required for the purpose was not provided by Parliament, but from the funds of the Church; the Ecclesiastical Commissioners being empowered, on the credit of their prospective funds, to borrow money from the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty. Even the very moderate amount of endowment for districts under Sir Robert Peel's Act was thus obtained from the funds of the Ecclesiastical Commission only by a process of anticipation. The ground on which Sir Robert Peel asked the House, a "Conservative" House of Commons, to assent to the measure, was expressly this, that "it called on them for no grant of public money. I wish," the Right Honourable Baronet added, "I could get such a grant with the unanimous concurrence of the House and of the country; but knowing my inability to obtain that unanimous concurrence, I must say that I think a sum appropriated from the revenues of the Church, as an encouragement to voluntary contributions, and a large sum also derived from individual contributions, will prove of greater service than a sum reluctantly voted by the House and reluctantly paid by a portion of the people; . . . and," he added, "I hope that those who have derived their property from the labour of a population to whom the advantages of religious instruction have been denied, will, by their voluntary exertions and individual subscriptions, promote, as they have already done in some degree, the means of the Church to extend the sphere of its present utility."

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THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE LATEST RESEARCHES.

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payment of the Papal priesthood, at least to secular purposes, not only unconnected with, but indirectly hostile to, the Church. And this disappointment was seriously aggravated, when a Bill was subsequently introduced into Parliament, one of the effects of which would have been to put a premium upon the extermination of Protestants. This episode in the ecclesiastical history of the period, though it can be but briefly touched upon in these pages, is yet deserving of at least a passing notice. It affords a striking illustration of the spirit in which the affairs of the Church were treated, under the auspices of a political party whose watchword was the improvement of the people, and, in reality, at the instigation of the Popish faction which had obtained in the Imperial Parliament that dangerous power of a small but determined minority, which Bishop Blomfield had so forcibly pointed out as one of the chief dangers involved in the Roman Catholic Emancipation Bill. It furnishes pleasing evidence, moreover, of the manly courage with which the Bishop was wont to stand forward in defence of the Church, whenever he thought that not merely temporal interests, but questions of religious principle were involved. In answer to the plea of necessity, which was urged by the supporters of the Bill, he observed: "No such necessity was then [during the debates on the Irish Church Temporalities Bill, two years before] admitted to exist: on the contrary, its existence was vehemently denied, by none more vehemently than by the very framers and supporters of this Bill. No, my Lords, it had not then assumed the consistency and force of necessity. It was a mere abstract principle, a speculation, floating in the political atmosphere in the form of vapour, which it required a storm in the political atmosphere to condense into a thunderbolt, in the shape of a legislative enactment, destined to fall upon the devoted heads of the Protestant clergy of Ireland. No, not destined to fall;

for your Lordships will yet interpose the shield of justice to screen them from the face to which they seek to have been appointed. But was there then no necessity for this measure? Ah yes, my Lords, there was a necessity, but of what kind? Of such a kind as an honest and constitutional statesman will not be forward to avow.* But it is enough to allude to it, without dwelling further on so painful a topic. Let us see whether besides this any other necessity for the measure can be alleged. It is said that it is necessary to pacify Ireland. Would it not, my Lords, that some plan could be devised for the pacification of that unhappy country? Which of your Lordships would not consent to sacrifice much for such an object? What is here meant by pacification? Look, my Lords, at the nature of the intended process. It does not deal with the country at large; it is intended to pacify it parish by parish; and how? to appease religious dissent, the bane of that land; and what remedy does the Bill supply? No doubt a very effectual one. In order to quiet the Roman Catholics, it will exterminate the Protestants; and then all will be quiet: *ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant.*"

After exposing the pernicious character of a measure which made the extinction of the Protestant Church in any given locality contingent on the reduction of the number of Protestant inhabitants below fifty, Bishop Blomfield thus concluded his powerful appeal on behalf of the sister Church in Ireland:—"I am speaking at a crisis of the Protestant Church: the fate of that Church, my Lords, in Ireland at least, is wrapped up in the decision to which your Lordships shall come this night: nay, more, my Lords, the fate of Protestantism itself in that unhappy country. Yes, my Lords, it is even so: if the light of God's truth is yet to burn on the shores of His

* The compact between the Melbourne Ministry and Daniel O'Connell.

sanctuary in that land, and to shed a dim but blessed light upon them who are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, and who will not receive the full and direct enlightenment of its beams—this can only be ensured by your resolutely upholding the Protestant Established Church. My Lords, do not dissemble to yourselves the truth that this measure is the first,—no, not perhaps the first,—but the boldest and most gigantic stride which has yet been taken towards the entire suppression of Protestantism in Ireland. But surely, my Lords, we ought to deal with that country as though it might one day become Protestant. If we are sincere Protestants ourselves, and believe that truth will ultimately prevail, we *must* entertain that persuasion. But what is the direct and palpable tendency of this measure? To papalize Ireland, to exterminate Protestantism. Every parish containing fewer than fifty Protestants is—what? to have fresh encouragements given to the true religion, so as to increase the number of its adherents? No; but to have its own Protestant clergyman withdrawn, with all the support, encouragement, and consolation which he is able to afford them. And what must be the result? That in almost every such case the dispirited and disheartened Protestants will expatriate themselves, and quit the place where their forefathers lived and died; or they will be speedily absorbed in the Roman Catholic population, surrounded as they will be by hostility and artifice, and plied with every engine of conversion. I know, my Lords, I shall be told,—indeed, I have been told,—again and again, ‘This is all very well: no doubt the Protestant Church in Ireland should be upheld if possible; but really it is such a monstrous anomaly, that we know not how to deal with it; and we hope you will not be so unwise as to identify the interests of the English Church with those of the Irish branch of it; nor with somewhat of the cruelty of Mezentius, and more than his folly, join the living te

the dead, that both may perish together.' My Lords, was this the language held at the Union? Had either branch of the Legislature then avowed such sentiments as these, would the Union ever have taken place? And if not, as is undoubtedly the case, is it fit language to be used to a Protestant Legislature, bound by the solemn compact of that Union; or at least, is it an argument which can be admitted by a Protestant Bishop?

"I do not, my Lords, pretend to a belief that both establishments, or rather that both branches of the same establishment, will fall together. Their destinies are not so linked to each other, that even if, by the irreversible decree of Providence, the Irish Protestant Church should be severed from that of England, and laid prostrate in the dust, its sister branch must necessarily encounter a similar fate. The circumstances of the two are no doubt exceedingly different. In this country we stand less in need of an establishment for the purpose of maintaining the true religion, than in Ireland. The interests of the Protestant faith in that country demand the support and aid of an establishment; and your Lordships would have to answer before God for passing such a measure as this, which would go to destroy its existence. But look at it in another point of view. What would be more calculated than the passing of such a measure, to inspire with fresh courage and confidence that hostile band of men, neither few in numbers, nor contemptible for talents and influence, who view the Protestant establishment in both countries with feelings of malignant hostility; who meditate its destruction: who, either by storm or sap, by force or fraud; by open and manly hostility, which it is easy to encounter and resist, or by insinuations, and inuendoes, and false reproaches, with which it is painful and difficult for honourable men to contend, are bent upon effecting the subversion of the Protestant Church of England; but who know, nevertheless, that it is hopeless to attempt it, while

the Protestant Church of Ireland stands. Once allow them to flesh their swords in the weaker institution, and they will rush forward, flushed with victory, to attack the stronger. 'Come on' will be their cry, 'we have succeeded once, under circumstances of the greatest discouragement, the most hopeless appearances, in opposition to the most sacred principles, the holiest feelings, the loveliest sympathies which can animate the human breast; we have succeeded, in the teeth of Acts of Parliament, in spite of the most solemn compacts, in violation of the promises once made by those who are now supporting our views: think you that we shall be less successful now, when we see before us so much richer a prize, when the victory will be so much more glorious?'—Every argument, my Lords, which is now urged for diminishing the Protestant Establishment in Ireland, will be urged hereafter with greater force for its abolition; and then the same weapons will be turned against the ancient institutions of England.

"My Lords, I have evinced, on more than one occasion, that I am not indisposed to adopt any well-considered measures of salutary and real reform. Least of all am I indisposed to their adoption with respect to that institution in which the dearest and best interests of the country are involved. But to a measure such as this, of direct spoliation, I will never give my consent. Your Lordships will do me the justice to admit, that I have not been accustomed, in the debates of this House, to use stronger language than the nature of the subject on which I have been speaking seemed to justify. But if there be terms in the English tongue more expressive and emphatic than others, I would gladly employ them on this occasion, while I implore your Lordships by all that you hold sacred, by the gratitude you owe to that Church from which you have imbibed your Christian principles and knowledge, in whose consolations, I trust, you delight—and may

you experience all their efficacy at the closing hour of your existence—not to give your consent to a measure which will destroy the Protestant Church of Ireland, without benefiting the poor Roman Catholic population; which will starve the meritorious dispensers of God's truth, without adding to the real comforts of those who are engaged in diffusing religious knowledge under a different form—a measure of which it is not too much to say, that it commences with spoliation and sacrilege, and must end in ruin and confusion."

The opposition of the Bishops and the Conservative Peers proved successful; the obnoxious clauses, the effects of which were so ably exposed in the speech from which we have quoted, were expunged from the Bill; and if the Church of Ireland is preserved to this day, as a witness to God's truth in opposition to the Papal lie, as an element of healing in that long and sorely afflicted country, assuredly the powerful vindication of her cause by Bishop Blomfield contributed in no small degree to that satisfactory result.

Before drawing our account of this period of Bishop Blomfield's career,—during which he was almost exclusively occupied in guarding the temporalities of the Church, in Ireland from entire spoliation, in England from extensive misappropriation,—to a close, it is due to him to recall to mind the fact that, after all, whatever may be their value as a means to an end, the preservation of the temporal possessions of the Church is a point of subordinate importance, when brought into competition with her spiritual duties and her spiritual interests. One invested with the responsible office of Chief Pastor may, therefore, well be excused for proving himself with regard to the former less tenacious, more unresisting, than a sound policy would seem to demand, if he be influenced in the course which he takes by the conviction, that by making a sacri-

fice of temporal advantages, he is in fact securing that which is of infinitely higher value, the spiritual character and efficiency of the Church. That such considerations had a large share in determining the line of action which Bishop Blomfield pursued, in the conflict forced upon him by the circumstances of the times, touching the temporal possessions of the Establishment, is sufficiently evident from the following observations in his Charge of 1834 :—

“ We should ill deserve the respect and attention which we claim, as ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, duly commissioned to ‘ feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood,’ if we could not lay our hands on our hearts, and declare before Him, that our attachment to that Church is superior to, and independent of, all consideration of its temporal endowments; that we love it because it is *His* Church; for *His* sake and the brethren’s; as inheriting the promise of His Spirit; as possessing richly the means of grace and edification; as the honoured instrument of making known His saving health to all nations. That we are utterly indifferent to the advantage, held out to us by our Church, of a competent and honourable maintenance, it would be idle to pretend; and there is no reason why we should pretend it. That ‘they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel,’ is the ordinance of its Divine Author; and there is nothing in the circumstance of their enjoying that livelihood, independent of the caprice of their hearers, which is in itself calculated to deteriorate the quality of those motives which lead men to undertake the ministry of our Church, or to defend its apostolical polity. A conclusive argument for the disinterestedness of the great body of the clergy is to be found in the fact, that the greater part of them enter upon their sacred office without any reasonable prospect of obtaining more than a scanty pittance, inferior to that

which might have been earned in almost any secular calling. I am confident that I speak the fixed and deliberate purpose of the great body of my brethren in the ministry, of whatever degree, or whatever advantages they may possess, when I say, that if the question were ever to arise between an abandonment of the Church's principles and the sacrifice of its endowments, it will be found that their choice has been made beforehand: they would 'take,' if not 'joyfully,' yet resignedly, 'the spoiling of their goods,' in the strength of that 'confidence,' which hath 'great recompense of reward.' But we plead, and we will continue to plead, for the temporal possessions and immunities which belong to the Established Church, because we are persuaded, and every day's experience proves it to be so, that they recommend the Church, and through it the doctrines which it teaches, to the acceptance of the people at large; that they give to all its ministers a vantage ground upon which they may take their stand, and proclaim the great truths of the Gospel with an authority, derived indeed from their high commission, but strengthened by the habits and prepossessions of their hearers; and because it serves as a perennial fountain of Divine truth, continually sending forth its streams to fertilize the dry and barren places of the land, which, if left to the operation of a voluntary system, would lie for ever desolate and neglected.

"But let it never be forgotten by those who would deprive us of our endowments, much less by those who share in them, that if they are adapted to impart a tinge of secularity to the motives which induce men to enter into the ministry of our Church, they add greatly to the spiritual responsibility of those who do enter. To promote the growth of the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth, and to fashion it to the likeness of His kingdom in heaven, are the great ends for which we have been called and set apart



CHAPTER XI.

Unpromising Aspect of Affairs—Bishop Blomfield's concern for the Spiritual Necessities of his Diocese—The "Metropolis Churches Fund"—Publication of "Proposals"—Evidence furnished by the Ecclesiastical Commission—Statistics of Spiritual Destitution in the Metropolis—Deficiency of Parochial Organization—Political and Social Dangers of this State of Things—Imperial Importance of the Subject—Extent of the Bishop's Scheme—Abortive suggestion for a Coal Tax—Appeal to the Religious Sense and the Charity of the Public—Meeting at London House—Formal Establishment of the "Fund"—Remarkable Constitution of the Committee—Munificent Contributions—Different classes of Contributors—Their Number limited—Decrease of Annual Receipts—Collections for Local Funds—The Bethnal Green Churches—Diocesan Church Building Society—Churches built and endowed by Individuals—Results of the Metropolis Churches Fund—Compared with those of the Ecclesiastical Commission—Striking Contrast between the Character of the Two Measures.

THE aspect which the affairs of the Church assumed after the retirement of Sir Robert Peel in April, 1835, and the return to power of the Melbourne Ministry on the shoulders of a compact band of Irish patriots,—the representatives, virtually, of the Popish priesthood,—was anything but encouraging. More particularly the turn which the proceedings of the Ecclesiastical Commission took, and which resulted in the enactment already referred to, was not calculated to sustain, in the minds of those who had an opportunity of closer observation, whatever hopes they might at one time have conceived of an effec-

tual remedy for the existing spiritual depression. Having Blomfield, whom this hope had tempted to give not only his countenance, but his ~~whole support and active cooperation~~, to the proposal for a ~~partial re-distribution~~ of the revenues of the Church, was not long in determining that whatever course it might be his duty to pursue in regard to the Ecclesiastical Commission, he must look in a totally different direction for the supply of the spiritual necessities of his populous and ill-provided diocese. This subject had, from his first entrance upon the London Episcopate, pressed upon his mind. In his Charge of 1854 he had dwelt upon it, and adduced some striking facts illustrative of the state of the Metropolitan diocese in respect of Church accommodation and ministerial care and superintendence of the people. In preparation to his hope of seeing a general remedy applied to all evil which existed in a greater or less degree, all over the country grow feebler, his active mind naturally turned to the consideration of such other means as might be devised for the application of a local remedy in that portion of the Church which was more especially committed to his charge.

Hence, while the Ministers were engaged in considering the measure which, towards the close of the session of 1854 they hurried through Parliament,* and which the principal members of the Ecclesiastical Commission had so much cause to regard with disapprobation and distrust, Henry Blomfield was occupied in the preparation of a measure of his own for the extension of the number of parishes in the diocese, which, although it did not realize all the expectations entertained by its projector, yet preserved both its principles and in its results, a most fortunate in-

* The second reading of the Bill was moved in the House of Commons by Lord John Russell on the 17th of June and the Bill was brought up to the House of Lords on the 26th of July. During its progress through the Upper House Bishop Hamilton was prevented by the state of his health from giving his attendance in Parliament.

trast to that inauspicious enactment. As early as the month of April in the year 1836, the Bishop published "Proposals for the creation of a Fund to be applied to the building and endowment of additional Churches in the Metropolis," the object of which was to "direct the attention of the public to the spiritual wants of the metropolis, and to the duty and necessity of making a united and vigorous effort to supply them through the medium of the Established Church." In order to lay a foundation for the appeal about to be made to the liberality of the members of the Church, the official account of the condition of the diocese, contained in the Second Report of the Church Commissioners, then recently laid before Parliament, was embodied in the "Proposals." In that Report the Commissioners gave it as their opinion that "the most prominent of those defects which crippled the energies of the Established Church, and circumscribed its usefulness, was the want of Churches and Ministers in the large towns and populous districts of the kingdom." In illustration of this general assertion, the Report adduced the following details relative to the metropolis:—

"Looking to those parishes only, which contain each a population exceeding 10,000, we find that in London and its suburbs, including the parishes on either bank of the Thames, there are four parishes or districts, each having a population exceeding 20,000, and containing an aggregate of 166,000 persons, with church-room for 8,200, (not quite one-twentieth of the whole,) and only 11 clergymen. There are 21 others, the aggregate population of which is 739,000, while the church-room is for 66,155, (not one-tenth of the whole,) and only 45 clergymen. There are 9 others, with an aggregate population of 232,000, and church-room for 27,327, (not one-eighth of the whole,) and only 19 clergymen. The entire population of these 34 parishes amounts to 1,137,000, while there is church-room only for 101,682. Supposing that

church-room is required for one-third, there ought to be sittings for 379,000 persons. There is, therefore, a deficiency of 277,318 sittings, or, if we allow 25,000 for the number of sittings in proprietary chapels, the deficiency will be 252,318. Allowing one church for a population of 3000, there would be required in these parishes, 379 churches: whereas there are in fact only 69, or, if proprietary chapels be added, about 100, leaving a deficiency of 279; while there are only 139 clergymen in a population exceeding a million."

In further illustration of the spiritual requirements of the population of London, the Bishop added, "At this moment there is in the metropolis and its suburbs,—omitting all notice of those parishes which contain less than 7000 inhabitants—a population of not less than 1,380,000, with church-room for only 140,000, or little more than one-tenth of the whole."

In commenting upon the statistical details contained in their Report, the Commissioners had called attention to the fact that a comparison between the amount of population and that of church-room, did not by itself furnish an accurate view of the amount of additional provision required, inasmuch as many of the chapels included in the account of the church-room had no districts assigned to them; and, the Commissioners added, "we consider the assignment of a district to each church or chapel to be necessary to the ends of pastoral instruction, and to carrying into full effect the parochial economy of the Established Church." The Report added, that the resources possessed by the Established Church, and capable of being made available to the application of a remedy for this lamentable deficiency in the means of religious instruction and pastoral superintendence were, in whatever way they might be husbanded or distributed, "evidently quite inadequate to the exigency of the case."

Upon these premises,—referring also to his statements

on this subject in his charge of 1834,*—the Bishop rested his appeal. “The evils,” he observed, “which flow from this state of things, and which must continue to increase, unless some remedy be speedily applied, are such as cannot be contemplated without grief by those who desire to bring into the fold of a scriptural Church the thousands who are now destitute of pastoral care and instruction; nor without the most serious apprehension, when it is considered in how great a degree the stability and prosperity of a country are dependent upon the principles and habits of those classes which form the basis of the social fabric. It is a work of prudence, not less than of charity, to impart to the multitudes who are now scarcely acquainted even with the first principles of Christianity, a knowledge of its duties and consolations, its motives and restraints; and the most hopeful method of effecting this, is to send more labourers into the Lord’s harvest; to increase the number of churches and clergymen; to bring home to the very doors and hearths of the most ignorant and neglected of the population, the ordinances, the solemnities, the decencies, and the charities of our Apostolical Church; to divide the moral wilderness of this vast city into manageable districts, each with its place of worship, its schools, and its local institutions.”

For this work it was that the Bishop “earnestly entreated the prompt and liberal assistance of the Christian public,” holding up for imitation the example of Glasgow and Manchester, where considerable sums,—20,000*l.* in the former, 12,000*l.* in the latter,—had recently been collected for the erection and endowment of new churches, and pointing out the much greater national importance of attending to the spiritual wants of the metropolis;—“an object in which,” he observed, “not merely the inhabitants of this great city, but the people of the empire

* See above, page 147.

at large are interested; for the influence of the metropolis upon all the towns of the kingdom, and upon the springs of the Government itself, is every day increasing." He intimated that his desire and hope was to obtain donations "much higher in amount, than those usually given as annual subscriptions," —in other words, that what he aimed at, was not a guinea subscription scheme, but a grand effort of Christian munificence, worthy of the wealthiest city and kingdom in the world.

The practical results contemplated by his "Proposals" were—the erection or purchase, and partial endowment, of at least fifty new churches, in the most populous parts of the metropolis and its suburbs; a district with regular cure of souls to be assigned to each church, and a certain fixed income, independent of pew-rents, secured to the minister; the appointment of the incumbents, except in cases where the patronage would be otherwise provided for by law, to be vested in the Diocesan, in preference to a system of elective trusteeship. To carry out these objects, he announced his intention of shortly submitting more specific proposals to the friends of the Church, in the mean time inviting their suggestions, and promises of support, so as to enable him to accompany those proposals with a list of subscriptions, as "an omen of final success." In a postscript he suggested that, in acknowledgment of its duty to provide for the spiritual wants of the people, the Legislature might possibly be induced to imitate the example of the Parliaments of the 9th of Queen Anne, and of the 1st of George I., which imposed a duty of 2*s.* and 3*s.* per chaldron, respectively, upon all coals imported into London; and he showed by calculation from ascertained data, that an addition of only 2*d.* to the duty of 8*d.* per ton, levied at this time upon coals imported into the metropolis,—an addition so trifling as scarcely to be felt by the consumers,—would yield an annual sum of upwards of 18,000*l.* That even this

modest suggestion fell to the ground, is but another proof of the low state of religious feeling to which the Legislature had sunk down. The success of the Bishop's scheme, however, did not depend on the good sense or good feeling of the House of Commons. His appeal was to the good sense and good feeling of the members of the Church. "I appeal," he said, "with no inconsiderable degree of confidence, to the humanity, as well as to the Christian charity, of my countrymen, to furnish the means, not merely of commencing, but of carrying on far towards its accomplishment, under the blessing of God, this most important work; the work of evangelizing thousands and hundreds of thousands of their poor brethren; of reclaiming them from practical heathenism; of imparting to them the Word and Sacraments of God, through the ministry of His Church; of placing them under the guidance and teaching of men rightly appointed to the office, and duly qualified for its discharge; of gathering them together into Christian neighbourhoods, each round its centre of knowledge and godliness; of giving increased efficiency, and therefore increased stability, to our Church; and so promoting at once the cause of social order and pure religion, and bringing down a blessing from Him Who is the author of peace and lover of concord, and the giver of national as well as individual prosperity."

The response made to this appeal did not altogether disappoint the Bishop's "confidence" in making it. On the 6th of July a meeting of noblemen and gentlemen was held at London House, when, under the patronage of the King, the Archbishop of Canterbury being Vice-Patron, and the Bishop of London President, a Committee*

* The list of names composing this Committee, when read by the light of subsequent events, is not a little curious, and furnishes a remarkable illustration of Bishop Blomfield's influence in bringing men of the most opposite tendencies to act together. In addition

was appointed, and regulations were framed, for the management of the Fund to be raised; and in the course of the same month publicity was given to the proceedings of this meeting, with a brief prefatory statement from the Bishop, in which the duty of the public was yet more strongly urged than in the original "Proposals." "A great effort," so ran the Bishop's plea, "is required; great, as men are now accustomed to measure the requirements of Christian charity: and yet, are there not hundreds of persons who could give to the cause of Christ and of His Church their thousand pounds each, without sacrificing one of their comforts or enjoyments? and are there not multitudes whom we have a *right* to call upon, even for such a sacrifice, if it be requisite, in order to rescue so many of their fellow-creatures from the miseries of irreligion and vice, and to prevent the further growth of an evil which threatens our national peace and safety? The duty of contributing to this object, is especially incumbent upon all those persons who are the *proprietors of land and houses* in the metropolis; and upon those who have been enabled, by the local advantages which it affords to business of various kinds, to realize a competent share of worldly goods.

"An earnest appeal is respectfully, but confidently, made to *all* the inhabitants of London and its suburbs, who possess the means of doing good; but *especially* to the *owners of large property in the metropolis*; to the *great companies and commercial establishments*; to the *merchants*,

to the dignitaries of the diocese, and such staunch supporters of the Church as the Rev. Dr. Spry, the Rev. H. H. Norris, and the Rev. J. E. Tyler, among the metropolitan clergy, and Sir R. H. Inglis, Mr. Joshua Watson, and Mr. William Cotton, among the laity, we find in the list of the Committee, side by side, Lord Ashley and Mr. Gladstone; the Rev. Dr. Pusey, and the Hon. and Rev. B. W. Noel;—and, as secretary to the Fund, that of Mr. W. Dodsworth, then a clergyman of the English Church, subsequently a layman of the Romish communion.

bankers, and *opulent tradesmen*; to lend prompt and effectual aid to the promotion of an object of such paramount importance; and to set an example to the great towns and populous districts of the empire, which cannot fail to exert a salutary influence upon its religious and moral state.

"The Bishop of London looks also with confidence to the clergy of this part of his diocese, to assist him in this important undertaking, by recommending it to their parishioners, and by soliciting donations from the wealthier amongst them."

The sum total of promises of support which, "as an omen of success," accompanied the above statement, exceeded 40,000*l.* The Bishop himself, by a contribution of 2000*l.*,* furnished a clue to what he meant by "donations much higher in amount than those usually given as annual subscriptions." Within two months of the publication of the scheme, the subscriptions amounted to upwards of 74,000*l.*; and within six months, at the close of the year 1836, to upwards of 106,000*l.*† As a first result, this could

* This was the amount of the Bishop's *first* donation. As the work of church-building proceeded, he continued to contribute liberally to the Fund. His recorded contributions to the Metropolis Churches Fund, the Bethnal Green Churches Fund, and the Diocesan Church Building Society, amount to 6,950*l.* This is exclusive of his contributions to individual churches,—generally 50*l.*, and sometimes more. Taking into account all these, and the cost of the erection and endowment of St. Stephen's, Hammersmith, at his sole expense, it has been calculated that the total amount of outlay incurred by Bishop Blomfield for promoting the erection and endowment of new churches in his diocese cannot be much under 30,000*l.*

† The following extracts from the Subscription List are illustrative of the spirit in which the Bishop's appeal was received:—the King, 1,000*l.*; Queen Adelaide, 300*l.*; the Duchess of Kent, 100*l.* (On the accession of Queen Victoria, in the following year, Her Majesty consented to become, like her predecessor, Patron of the Fund, and gave a donation of 1,000*l.*) The Archbishop of Canter-

not be otherwise than highly gratifying: but the brilliant example set by a few was not followed by the community at large; nor was the first ardour of liberality, excited by the Bishop's appeal, sustained. A sum of 11,000*l.* only was added during the first half-year of 1837; the year 1837-8 produced no more than 9,900*l.*; the year 1838-9 only 5,600*l.* This gradual falling-off in the amount of new contributions suggested, early in the year 1839, the establishment of special funds for particular localities, in the hope of creating thereby a more powerful personal interest. Among these local funds the most successful was that established,—on the suggestion of Mr. William Cotton, the Governor of the Bank, and most efficient coadjutor of Bishop Blomfield in this great and

bury, 1,000*l.*; the Bishop of Llandaff, as Dean of St. Paul's, 500*l.*; the Bishops of Salisbury and Chichester, 100*l.* each; the Bishop of Calcutta, 200*l.*; the Dean of Westminster, 200*l.*; Archdeacon Cambridge, 200*l.*; Rev. Dr. Pusey, and Rev. C. P. Golightly, 1,000*l.* each; three other clergymen, 500*l.* each; Brasenose College, and Magdalen College, Oxford, 1,000*l.* each; Trinity College, Cambridge, 300*l.*; Oriel College and St. John's College, Oxford, and St. John's College, Cambridge, 200*l.* each; Magdalen College, Cambridge, 100*l.* The Dukes of Portland and of Bedford, and Lord Rolle, 1,000*l.* each; the Marquesses of Cholmondeley and Exeter, the Earl of Harrowby, Lords Bexley, Calthorpe, and Kenyon, 500*l.* each; the Earl of Dartmouth and Earl Howe, 200*l.* each; Sir Robert Peel, 200*l.*; Lord John Russell, 50*l.*; George Byng, Esq., 2,000*l.*; G. Davenport, Esq., 1,000*l.*; W. Cotton, Esq., and Joshua Watson, Esq., 500*l.* each; Sir R. H. Inglis, 200*l.* The Corporation of the city of London, 500*l.*; five city companies—the Merchant Tailors, Mercers, Saddlers, Goldsmiths, and Grocers, 500*l.* each; and the Clothworkers' Company, 100*l.* The banking firms of Messrs. Hoare, 1,000*l.*; Messrs. Child, Coutts, Drummond, Smith Payne and Smith, and Williams Deacon and Co., 500*l.* each; Messrs. Gosling and Sharp, 200*l.* Among the anonymous donations are, 5,000*l.* from "a Clergyman seeking treasure in heaven;" 1000*l.* from "a District Visitor;" 1,090*l.* from "Exhort one another, lest any of you be hardened." One name of no small note we look for in vain,—that of the doughty champion of the sacredness of church property, the facetious Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's.

good work,—for the erection and endowment of ten new churches in the one parish of Bethnal Green: a parish which had attained a deplorable pre-eminence among the metropolitan parishes by its extreme poverty and squalor, its crime and turbulence, no less than by the excess of its crowded population, and the extent of its spiritual destitution. The result of this modification of the plan was far from unfavourable: in addition to the sum of 5,600*l.* raised for the general purposes of the fund in the year 1838–9, the special contributions for Bethnal Green reached nearly 13,000*l.*; and in the following year 1839–40, the account stood thus:—General Fund, 3,700*l.*; Bethnal Green Fund, 13,000*l.*; other local objects, 13,000*l.*

The labours of the Committee charged with the management of the Metropolis Churches Fund were continued with varying success, under the superintendence and active co-operation of Bishop Blomfield, for the space of eighteen years: after which it was deemed advisable to enlarge the basis of its operations by extending them to the entire diocese, and establishing, with a view to their permanency, a Diocesan Church-building Society. When, in May, 1854, this enlargement of the plan was determined on, a final report of the Metropolis Churches Fund was drawn up, which exhibits the following aggregate results:—The sum total of contributions obtained was, in round numbers, 266,000*l.* The management of the Fund had been so judicious, that while an amount of 23,000*l.* was realized from interest upon the sums invested from time to time, until called for by the operations of the Committee, the outlay for expenses of management for the whole space of eighteen years was only 5,100*l.* In the application of the Fund to the purpose for which it was collected, the Committee adopted the plan of making their grants dependent, wherever it was practicable, on local efforts. By this means the Fund was made instrumental in the erection and endowment of seventy-eight new churches,

of which thirteen only were entirely chargeable to the Fund; and the sum total expended upon these seventy-eight churches, inclusive of the grants from the Fund, was 536,000*l*. But this was not all. The impulse given by the appeal and the example of the Diocesan led to the erection and endowment of seven new churches by individuals at their sole cost,—one of them, St. Stephen's, Hammersmith, by the Bishop himself. The total amount of accommodation thus provided was 106,000 sittings, or, according to the usual calculation, reckoning the accommodation required at one-third of the gross population, church-room for 318,000. The addition to the number of clergy for whose employment provision was made, wholly or in part, was 146; and, including 25 clergymen supported in connexion with the new churches by the Additional Curates Fund, and 8 by the Pastoral Aid Society, the actual increase of clergy was 179.

If with these results we compare those produced by the Ecclesiastical Commission, the contrast is indeed striking. The aggregate population of new districts for which the Ecclesiastical Commissioners provided a partial endowment,—below 150*l*. on an average,—(not a shilling being contributed by them towards the erection of churches,) between the years 1836 and 1854, the period over which the operations of the Metropolis Churches Fund extended, was only 854,870,—that is, in the proportion of 8 to 3 to the population provided with churches, and to some extent with endowments for the clergy, by means of the Metropolis Churches Fund. The amount of additional clerical supervision called forth by the Ecclesiastical Commission was 242, by the Metropolis Churches Fund 179, being in the proportion of 4 to 3. On the other hand, the expenses of management of the Ecclesiastical Commission, according to the returns for the period during which its expenditure can be ascertained, averaged nearly

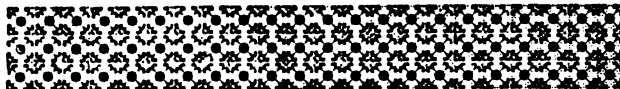
20,000*l.* per annum; * those of the Metropolis Churches Fund 280*l.* per annum, being in the proportion of 70 to 1. The advantage resulting from the augmentation of 856 benefices, at the rate of little more than 50*l.* on an average, by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, can hardly be considered in the light of a compensation for the monstrous disproportion which these data exhibit, between the expense incurred and the results produced. But in addition to this, let the sources from which, by either measure, the means of effecting these results were attained, and the general character of the two measures, be taken into account:—in one case, the patrimony of the Church, devoted to the service of God by the piety of former ages, transferred from its freehold tenure by ecclesiastical persons to the hands of a State Commission, subject to the control of the political Government, which, during the greater part of the time has proved, and bids fair to prove in an increasing degree, hostile to the Church; involving, moreover, the diversion of property given for pious uses from the objects contemplated by the donors, in other words, a breach of faith

* From the manner in which the accounts of the Ecclesiastical Commission were kept, it is impossible to ascertain from the published documents what was the annual cost of the working of the Commission down to the end of 1843. From 1844 a different mode of keeping the accounts was introduced; and for the eleven years, down to 1854, inclusive, the published documents present the following aggregate amounts:—

Parliamentary Grants for Salaries in the	
Civil Service Estimates	£ 36,011
General Charges of Management defrayed	
out of the Funds of the Commission . .	78,162
Payments to Solicitors, Surveyors, Archi-	
fects and Agents	97,493
	<hr/> £211,666

Being, on the average of the eleven years, an annual cost of 19,242*l.* per annum.

towards the dead ; the reduction of the cathedral establishments, the proper centres of Diocesan action, to the *minimum* of support consistent with their continued existence ; and the degradation of the Episcopate from the rank of an independent estate to the dependent position of stipendiaries on a public fund administered virtually by the State :—in the other case, the voluntary offerings of pious persons, devoting a portion of their substance to the service of Almighty God, after the example of the piety of former ages ; involving no spoliation, direct or indirect, no breach of faith ; not impairing the efficiency, nor undermining the security and independence, of any portion of the Church's fabric ; but simply diverting a certain amount of private wealth from the uses of this world to the purposes of the Kingdom of Christ, to His purposes Who is the Giver of all wealth ; and in the act of doing so, calling forth the exercise of some of the chief graces of the Christian character by those who felt it a privilege to take part in so good a work :—let all this be considered, and there can be little doubt which of the two expedients for relieving the spiritual destitution of the people was the more accordant with the principles, as well as with the true interests, of the Church ; little doubt which of the two was eventually contemplated with the greater comfort by the mind of Bishop Blomfield, who, while under the pressure of a great difficulty, and the delusive hope of extensive and permanent good, he had acquiesced, and at one time actively concurred, in the one, had the satisfaction of having originated the other.



CHAPTER XII.

Insufficiency of the Provision made by the Metropolis Churches Fund—Enormous and Artificial Increase of Population—Noble Example set by Bishop Blomfield—Failure of Duty on the part of the Large Proprietors and the Trading Community—National Mammon Service—Practical Heathendom of the Masses—Continued Demand for Church Extension—Importance of adherence to Church Principles—Salutary influence of New Churches and Parochial Districts—Testimony of the Churchwardens of Bethnal Green—Visitation Charge of 1846—Expenditure for Penal and Reformatory Institutions—Refusal of State Assistance to the Work of Church Extension—Duty of the Church towards the Neglected Populations—Missionary Character of the Work—The Wealthy Laity Rebuked—Last Visitation Charge—Church building a Principal Feature of Church Extension—Other Measures for Evangelising the Masses subsidiary and preparatory—Dangerous Illness of the Bishop in 1836—Remonstrance against Excessive Labour—The Bishop's Reply—Death of Dr. Burton—Dr. Hampden appointed Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford—Five Bishoprics vacated by Death—The new See of Ripon—Royal Control over the Episcopal Patronage of the Crown.

HOWEVER favourable the light in which the Metropolis Churches Fund appears, when contrasted with the Ecclesiastical Commission, it must be admitted, and by no one was it more deeply felt than by Bishop Blomfield himself, that the measure failed to effect all that the spiritual condition of the metropolis required. But this is assuredly no argument against the course pursued by the Bishop, when he issued the appeal which

called that Fund into existence. It is true, no doubt, that the number of new churches created by the Fund was not quite one-third, the number of additional sittings provided little more than two-fifths, of the number required to meet the existing destitution of parishes containing a population of 10,000 and upwards, when the appeal was issued; and it is true, moreover, that while the accommodation provided by means of this Fund fell thus lamentably short of the actual wants of the population at the time when this remedy was first suggested, the increase of the population,—at the rate of about 600,000 during the eighteen years,—amounted to double the population for which the means of grace were provided; thus leaving, at the end of the eighteen years, a larger amount of spiritual destitution than existed at the beginning of that period: but neither the inadequacy of the sums eventually raised to the object for which they were required, nor the gigantic increase of the evil which it was proposed to remedy, can with fairness be objected against the design itself, or against its originator. As regards the increase of population, it cannot even be alleged that it ought to have been calculated upon; inasmuch as the increase was not a natural but an artificial increase, produced by the position of the metropolis as a great centre of commerce, and by the feverish activity of commercial enterprise. And as regards the inadequacy of the sums raised, the obvious answer is, that if the example of the Bishop had been followed,—if the wealthy inhabitants of the metropolis, the great owners of the soil and other large proprietors, as well as the merchants, manufacturers and traders of all kinds, for the increase of whose gains those masses of population are drawn together, had all, during those eighteen years, given of their substance in the same ratio as Bishop Blomfield gave in proportion to the revenues of his See, that is, about one-tenth of the whole, the funds collected would have been more than sufficient, not only to relieve the

pressure of spiritual destitution at the time when his appeal was first made, but to provide for all the subsequent increase of population. As long as the laity, with rare but highly honourable exceptions, continue, in their individual, not less than in their corporate capacity as represented by Parliament, to turn a deaf ear to the voice of the National Church, which calls upon them, instead of living in luxury and hoarding up wealth, to deny themselves for the promotion of the kingdom of Christ, and the salvation of souls,—on the idle, not to say the hypocritical plea, that the resources of the Church are ample, and only require to be more carefully husbanded and more equally distributed,—so long must we expect that the noblest efforts of individual churchmen, whether they be bishops, priests, or laymen, will fail to touch that deep and dangerous sore of modern society in our land, the irreligion, the practical heathendom, of the masses. And fearful, indeed, will be the responsibility incurred by those on whom it devolves, whether in the metropolis or in the country at large, to carry on the great work of church extension, so nobly taken in hand by Bishop Blomfield, if they should be found to disparage his labours, because through the intensity of our national Mammon-service they produced inadequate results; if, instead of boldly rebuking, as he did in his day, the national sin, they should do homage to the spirit of the age, and devise for the spiritual supervision of the people methods inconsistent with the principles of the Church, with the Ordinance of Christ,—methods recommended mainly by their cheapness, and deriving their sanction from the popular sentiment of an unbelieving age.

But in whatever way this great and vital question may hereafter be dealt with, the truth, the justice of history require that the eminent services rendered to the cause of religion by Bishop Blomfield, in the establishment of the Metropolis Churches Fund, should be recorded and ac-

knowledge as one of those measures which, being productive of great and lasting good, shed lustre on his Episcopate. Nor is the substantial benefit which by it has been conferred on his diocese to be measured by mere statistical data. "A bare enumeration," it is justly observed in the "Final Report" of the Metropolis Churches Fund, "of the sums expended and the number of churches built, gives but an inadequate representation of what, by the blessing of God, has been accomplished through the instrumentality of this Fund. Much has been done which cannot meet the eye of man; and even of that which is visible, much does not come within the province of this Committee to report."* The estimate formed of the beneficial results of the measure by those who had the best

* In illustration of the effect produced upon the population of a parish on which the proposal of Bishop Blomfield was fully brought to bear, the following particulars, contained in the Report of the affiliated Bethnal Green Churches Fund, will be read with interest:—

"Scarcely have the twelve new Church districts felt in themselves the inherent vitality of the parochial system, but they have put forth their powers and sought to expand themselves into their legitimate proportions. In several instances the schools are so crowded that the incumbents are exerting themselves to obtain additional school-room, and in St. Bartholomew's, and St. Jude's, plans are already put out for erecting *additional* schools in those parishes!

"Property in Bethnal Green has, moreover, so improved since the Church movement began, that the rental of the whole parish, which was then 90,000*l.*, has now increased to 113,000*l.*

"The character of the population has shown so great an advance, that while the poor-rates were, in 1839, 15,000*l.*, they are now reduced to 14,000*l.*, although the population has increased from 70,000 to 90,170.

"In 1840 the number of baptisms was only 768, while in 1850 they had increased to 2,080; in the former year there was scarcely a single provident fund or clothing club in the parish, in the latter (besides what may have been paid into savings' banks) 4,984 depositors in eight provident funds had paid 1,802*l.* of their own savings

opportunities of judging, may be collected from an address presented to the Bishop, on the consecration of the last of the ten Bethnal Green churches, by the churchwardens and other leading inhabitants of the ten districts into which the parish of Bethnal Green had been divided, "in token of respect and admiration of his wisdom, energy, and Christian benevolence, and in grateful acknowledgment of his paternal regard for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the people, as particularly exemplified in the unwearied zeal, the wise counsels, and the unflinching liberality, by which he aided and encouraged the building and endowment of ten additional churches in the parish of Bethnal Green. The erection of these edifices, now completed," the memorialists say, "has been watched with the greatest interest; and the benefits derived from them are already manifest in the improved appearance of the neighbourhood, as well as in the habits and demeanour of the poor, for whose welfare they were principally designed; in connexion with which, as part of the same benevolent plan, are the national schools, by means of which provision is made for the religious training of thousands of the rising generation, who would otherwise have grown up in hopeless ignorance of their duty, both toward God and man. The great and salutary effects of such spiritual machinery will in future times, under the blessing of Divine Providence, be abundantly evident, and redound to the glory of God in the salvation of many souls."

into the hands of the clergy, and received the same with interest at the close of the year; while the sums paid into clothing clubs and other kindred institutions increased this amount to 2,298*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.*"

Another important testimony to the value of the spiritual provision made for the parish of Bethnal Green is contained in the Report made to the Association for promoting the Relief of Destitution in the Metropolis, by a deputation headed by the Earl of Harrowby, which by appointment visited Bethnal Green.

What was the view taken by Bishop Blomfield himself of the difficulties which beset this work, as well as of the results which it might be expected to produce, we learn from his allusions to the subject in two of his Visitation charges. In 1846, having reviewed the history of the Metropolis Churches Fund, which had then been in existence for ten years, the Bishop dwelt with much earnestness on the duty of the State to make provision for the spiritual wants of the people, as well as on the duty of the Church to supply the lack of service on the part of the State. "It is fearful to think," he said,—after giving some statistical details respecting the religious condition of the metropolis as it then stood—"and yet I see not how we can escape the conclusion, that more than a million of souls in this vast aggregate of human beings are unprovided with the means of grace; and that, for want of them, thousands and thousands are suffered to pass every year into the eternal world, 'in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity,' having no share in the comforts, or privileges, or hopes of the Gospel. Is not this a case in which the resources of the State might be equitably and profitably employed, if not to do all that is wanted, yet at least to aid the pious and charitable endeavours of private Christians? As Luther told the magistrates of Germany, that if they desired the strength and prosperity of their country, they would, in addition to all the money laid out upon walls, and dykes, and munitions of war, pay a few schoolmasters to teach the rising generation, so may we with truth remind *our* rulers, that if but a tithe of the outlay which is annually voted for gaols, and penitentiaries, and convict emigration, were expended upon churches and schools, it would provide that which, in due time, would obviate, in great measure, the necessity of such a costly machinery of punishment and reformation. But we cannot afford to wait for the re-awakened liber-

ality of the Legislature. The Church must endeavour, by her own unassisted energies, 'to lengthen her cords, and strengthen her stakes,' and to gather into her fold those who are now 'scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd.'"

To the objection which had been raised, that the new churches were not more than half filled,—which, it was alleged, proved the whole scheme to be a failure.—the Bishop, in the same charge, replied by observing that "the statement was by no means generally true," and that, where it was true, it might be accounted for without supposing either the scheme itself to be faulty, or the agents employed in carrying it out incompetent or unfaithful. "In neighbourhoods," the Bishop continued, "where there existed a comparatively educated and well-informed population, feeling the want of the Church's teaching and ordinances, and desiring to have that want supplied, it was to be expected that, when a church should have been built, it would be well attended. And such has been the case. But in these great and populous parishes, where the mass of the people had been left almost entirely without the benefits of pastoral superintendence, or religious instruction of any kind, their physical and social condition being mostly on a level with their spiritual, it would have been perfectly marvellous, if our new churches had been all at once, or even within a few years, filled with worshippers. In such districts as these, the work to be done by the Church is of a strictly missionary kind. The people are to be taught the very first rudiments of Christianity; and before even that can be done, they must be brought to a knowledge of Christianity itself, as a fact. The religious sense is to be awakened in them: and the obstacles which oppose themselves to the efforts of the clergy in such a work, are even greater, in some respects, than those which are encountered by the missionary in

heathen lands. The change, to be effected in this case, must be gradual, and will be wrought chiefly through the medium of the rising generation. The school must train up a congregation for the church; while at the same time the influence of religious instruction will in many instances find its way through the children to the parents. We have therefore been especially careful, in such districts, to provide *schools* as well as *churches*, and schools *before* churches, where both could not be reared at one and the same time; and the good, resulting from our efforts, is to be measured by the effect of this joint provision, and not merely by the number of persons who have, up to the present time, availed themselves of the increased facilities of attending public worship."

While the Bishop thus laid ample grounds for the entreaty addressed to his clergy on this occasion, that they would anew urge the claims of the Metropolis Churches Fund upon their wealthier parishioners, he pointedly expressed his sense of the obligation which devolved upon the laity in this matter. "Remind your wealthy parishioners," he said, "that the want which it is intended to supply, is, in great measure, occasioned by those very causes which augment their own resources, or contribute to their pleasures. The labourers and artisans, who form the bulk of that population whom we desire to bring under the Church's teaching and care, minister to their wealth and comfort. Liberal as have been the contributions to our Fund, we cannot dissemble the fact, that it has been raised chiefly by large donations from a few; and that many, whose connexion with the metropolis is a source of profit, or an occasion of pleasure, have not yet thrown their offerings into the treasury of the Lord's House. There are not a few members of our Church, whose incomes, derived from the successful pursuit of commerce in this great city, are so large, that they might

annually build and endow a Church, without abridging themselves of a single comfort, or even luxury.

"Ego vectigalia magna,
Divitiasque habeo tribus amplas regibus. Ergo
Quod *superat*, non est melius quo insumere possis?
Cur eget indignus quisquam, te divite? *Quare*
Templa ruunt antiqua Deum? Cur, improbe, caræ
Non aliquid patriæ tanto emetiris acervo?" *

"I humbly thank God that He has put it into the heart of some of His servants to set a noble example in this respect, and to emulate the pious munificence of older times."

The following observations, which occur in the last charge delivered to the clergy of his diocese by Bishop Blomfield, deserve to be deeply weighed by those whose duty it will be to take further measures for supplying the spiritual wants of the people. They were called forth by the transition already mentioned from the temporary operations of the Metropolis Churches Fund to the permanent action of the Diocesan Church Building Society, and throw great and valuable light on the place which, in the opinion of so experienced a Pastor as Bishop Blomfield, the work of church-building holds among other measures of church extension. Speaking of the methods for evangelising the masses of the population, touched upon in the Report then recently drawn up by the Committee of Convocation, the Bishop remarks:—"Some of the methods pointed out in that Report for supplying the spiritual wants of the people cannot be resorted to until some modification of the Church's rules shall be sanctioned by legislative enactment. But others have been already tried, and blessed with a measure of success proportioned to the

* Horat. Sat. II. ii. 100.

scale upon which the experiment has been made. Amongst these I cannot but regard the building of additional churches as one of the most important: not merely because it furnishes increased means of attendance upon the Church's teaching and ordinances; but because it carries with it of necessity an increased number of labourers in the great harvest-field of souls. Every additional church ensures to the district in which it is built always one, and mostly two, additional clergymen, with their staff of assistants, in the persons of schoolmasters, Scripture-readers, and district visitors. It is, indeed, in many cases advisable to send additional clergymen to labour in populous parishes, where it may not be practicable, for a time at least, to provide for the erection of a new church; and in such a case I have never hesitated to sanction the celebration of Divine service in a school-room, or any other convenient building, whether on Sundays or work-days; a still better provision being a temporary church, which may now be purchased or hired at a moderate cost, and which has in several instances accelerated the erection of a permanent building. And in general, it is no doubt expedient, where an additional church is required, to send a clergyman at once to labour in that district, and to form the nucleus at least of a congregation, ready to avail themselves of the opportunities which the new church will afford them when it is built. But the provision thus made for the spiritual wants of a district will not be complete without the erection of a church. This ensures an additional number of clergymen; whereas an addition to the number of the clergy in any parish does not ensure, though it may render more probable, a provision for additional church accommodation."

The year 1836, memorable in the history of Bishop Blomfield's Episcopate by the establishment of the Metro-

sentation of the address, as no immediate steps would be taken in the matter. Within a few days after this interview, Lord Melbourne went down to Brighton, where the King was staying at the time, and obtained from the unconscious Monarch, whose ears the remonstrance of the University had never reached, the Royal sanction to the obnoxious appointment.

While the indignation and alarm caused by these proceedings on the part of the Prime Minister were at their height, the death of Bishop Van Mildert, of Durham, placed another important ecclesiastical appointment at the disposal of the Crown; and two more bishoprics fell vacant within little more than a month from the death of Bishop Van Mildert, by the decease of Bishop Ryder of Lichfield and Coventry, and of Bishop Sparke of Ely. Beyond the translation of Dr. Maltby from Chichester to Durham, however, no advantage was taken of these opportunities of reinforcing the episcopal bench from the school represented on it by that Prelate. The country had been thoroughly roused by Dr. Hampden's installation in the Divinity chair at Oxford; and the King, who took a more serious view of the responsibility attaching to ecclesiastical, and especially to episcopal appointments, than his *poco curante* Minister, had been put on his guard. It was not thought advisable, therefore, to offer any fresh outrage to the religious feelings either of the Monarch or of the Church. The three sees of Chichester, Lichfield, and Ely, as well as, later in the year, the newly-created see of Ripon, and, in the spring of the following year, the see of Salisbury, vacated by the death of Bishop Burgess, were filled by men who possessed and deserved the confidence of the Church. It was not till the death of Bishop Bathurst, of Norwich, in the following year, that an appointment consonant with the heterodox traditions of that ill-fated see gave fresh cause for dissatisfaction; nor

was it until a new reign, that Lord Melbourne ventured, in the appointment of a successor to Bishop Grey of Hereford, to revert to Earl Grey's notable device of degrading the episcopate into a means of rewarding political party services.





CHAPTER XIII.

Infidelity of Modern Liberalism—Popish Influence in the House of Commons—The Position of the Church as a National Establishment assailed—The Church's Hold on the Country through her Social Influence—Systematic Course of Insidious Aggression—Parochial Administration of Relief to the Poor—Commission of Inquiry—Bishop Blomfield Chief Commissioner—His desire to bring back the Poor to Honest Independence—Effects of the Measure not answerable to his Expectations—Evils of severing Parochial Relief from Christian Charity and Spiritual Supervision—The New Registration Law—Matrimony reduced to a Civil Contract—Government Scheme for the Abolition of Church-rates—Dissenting Agitation—Great Church Meeting—The King averse to the Scheme—Debate in the House of Commons—Meeting of Bishops—Declaration of the Archbishop in the House of Lords—Attack upon the Episcopate by Lord Melbourne—Indignant Reply of Bishop Blomfield—The Scheme denounced as "Sacrilegious Spoliation"—Its Real Objects unmasked—Dwindling Majority in the House of Commons—Virtual Defeat of the Scheme—Illness and Death of William IV.—Accession of Queen Victoria.

THE result of the experiment made upon the forbearance of the Church by the appointment of Dr. Hampden, was so far satisfactory, that it offered no encouragement to the men in power to commit, for the present, at all events, any further direct aggressions upon her in the exercise of the ecclesiastical patronage of the Crown. Nevertheless, the general tendency of their administration, directed by that spirit of infi-

delity, which underlies modern Liberalism, and by the influence of the Papacy, brought to bear upon them through Daniel O'Connell and his band of followers, continued, as it had been from the first, adverse to the position of the Church as a national establishment. The foundations of that position had been seriously shaken by the admission to political power, first of Dissenters, and subsequently of Romanists. But the Church had struck her roots deep into the soil of the country, and thrown out numberless fibre roots, by which she was connected with every part of the social system. To cut off these, a succession of legislative enactments was proposed, which bore more or less directly upon the interests of the Church. By bringing under the exclusive control of the secular Government matters of every day life, over which the Church had hitherto exercised a salutary influence, it was thought that her hold upon the hearts and minds of the people might be insensibly loosened. According to the established order of things, it was the Church that gave to the marriage ceremony, in all but a few exceptional cases, not only its religious character, but its legal sanction; it was the Church that received the new-born infant in her arms, and, while bestowing upon it the privileges and blessings of the Christian Covenant, witnessed to its civil *status*; it was the parochial school that stood *in loco parentis* in the case of children whose parents were unable, through poverty or ignorance, to make provision for the proper training of their offspring; it was in connexion with the parochial system of the Church, that legal provision was made for the poor and needy, the sick and the aged; and it was the Church that, after the closing scene of life, took charge of the remains of frail mortality, and committed them to the earth with solemn words of prayer and of consolation. That in the discharge of these functions the Church had not at all times come up to the high mark of her duty, no candid

inquirer into the history of the great revolution which has been brought about in all the social relations of life, will deny; and it must be admitted, moreover, that in regard to those portions of the population which had broken away from the doctrine and discipline of the Church, there was a mutual inconvenience, a grievance to the Church and to her ministers, no less than to the dissentients themselves, in the state of the law which brought them on certain occasions within reach of her action and under her jurisdiction. And had legislation been confined to the simple object of providing for the more efficient discharge of her duties by the Church, on the one hand,—had it, on the other hand, relieved the Church from the duty of ministrations which were a burden to the consciences of her clergy, and simply enabled the dissentients to make for themselves arrangements more consonant with their own views,—there would have been no just cause of complaint. But, unfortunately, the course of legislation bearing upon all these questions was of a character totally different. Taking advantage of the fact, that abuses had crept into the Church's administration of the matters committed, wholly or partially, to her charge, and of the repudiation of her offices by some, on grounds of religious difference, the opponents of the Church in the Legislature sought,—and as far as they were enabled to carry out their views, they proceeded,—to abrogate the whole of the existing machinery of parochial administration.

The first point to which this system of attack upon the social influence of the Church was directed, was the parochial administration of relief to the poor. This had been very generally suffered, by the clergy and the more influential laity, to fall into incompetent and often unscrupulous hands; and the result of this neglect had been the upgrowth of abuses which imperatively called for correction and reform. To apply this, a Commission was appointed early in the year 1832, which was charged “to

make a diligent and full inquiry into the practical operation of the laws for the relief of the poor in England and Wales, and into the manner in which those laws were administered," and "to report their opinion whether any and what alterations, amendments or improvements, might be beneficially made in the said laws, or in the manner of administering them, and how the same might be best carried into effect." On this commission, Bishop Blomfield, who, it appears had given considerable attention to the subject of the administration of the parochial relief system, was induced by Lord Althorp, not only to give his services, but to accept the onerous post of Chief Commissioner. Associated with him in the Commission were, the Bishop of Chester, Dr. Sumner, Mr. Stourges Bourne, the Rev. H. Bishop, and several laymen, mostly barristers,—amongst them Mr. Edwin Chadwick, whose name is permanently identified with the Commission. The views with which Bishop Blomfield consented to take a part in the inquiry, and concurred in the report of the Commission, may be collected from the observations which he made in his place in Parliament, on the introduction into the Upper House of the Bill founded upon that report, though altered in some material points in its progress through the House of Commons. The object of the enactment, as framed by the Commissioners, was, according to Bishop Blomfield's understanding of it, "to reinstate the labouring classes of this country in the position they had formerly occupied; to bring them again to depend upon their own honest exertions for the supply of their wants, without having recourse to the parish funds on every trifling emergency," an object which the Bishop properly described as being "not less consistent with the soundest principles of humanity, than with the most approved maxims of political economy." And on a subsequent occasion he declared, that "he did not despair of seeing the poor of this country, under the operation

of a judicious and wise law, return to that high and independent feeling, which formerly induced them to think it disgraceful to derive support from any other source than their own honest exertions." Of the history of his connexion with the measure the Bishop gave, in the course of the debates upon it, the following account:—"When I was first applied to by the noble Lord, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to become one of the Commissioners for inquiring into the Poor Laws, I felt a very strong reluctance to embark in that inquiry. I had a pretty clear perception of the obloquy to which I should probably expose myself by doing my duty in the examination of such a subject,—a subject to which I had paid rather close attention for several years past. I knew that many of the recommendations which would probably be made by that Commission, and to the making of which I should be a party, would be of such a nature as would be likely to expose me to the imputations which have been since so liberally lavished upon the Commissioners. I yielded, however, to the solicitation of that noble Lord, and consented to take upon me the office. Having done so, I should have been wanting in the duty I owed to the country at large, had I not faithfully and fearlessly applied myself to the duties of that office. If, in the execution of those duties, I felt myself compelled to adopt opinions at variance with the sentiments of many with whom I am accustomed to concur, I trust I shall not, on that account, be accused of acting under the influence of unworthy motives."

To this apologetic appeal the pen of history is bound to pay the same deference that was paid to it by the assembly to which it was addressed. No imputation, indeed, can rest upon Bishop Blomfield for the part which he took in this great legislative change; although subsequent experience has shown, that while some of the evils which had given rise to it, have been remedied, the measure

has not, in other respects, answered the expectations of its framers. Much hardship, such as Bishop Blomfield repeatedly declared it impossible to suppose would ever result from it, has been inflicted on the poor through the machinery provided by the Act; that high feeling of independence which the Bishop was anxious and hopeful to see restored, has unhappily not been induced by its operation; though some of the more profligate forms of immorality, against which the enactment was directed, have been rendered legally impossible, it is much to be feared that the morality of the lower classes has not improved, as is evident from the appalling frequency of the crime of infanticide; and while, thus, in some important particulars, the measure has proved a decided failure, one consequence, not anticipated at the time, has been produced by it, which, in the interest of the poor and of public morality, cannot be too much deplored,—the severance of parochial relief to the poor and needy, the sick and the aged, from the influence of Christian charity and spiritual supervision, by handing it over to the heartless rule of political economy and bureaucratic formality.

Another, and a still more serious inroad upon the social influence of the Church, was made by the Acts establishing a system of civil registration of births and of marriages; by the latter of which, matrimony was reduced to a mere civil contract, and facilities were given for contracting marriages without any of those moral checks, consequent upon the performance of the marriage ceremony in the face of the Church and through the instrumentality of the minister of religion. Attempts had been made, as early as the year 1834, in the House of Commons, to legislate upon this subject; but they had proved abortive, and it was not until the year 1836, that the measures in question, being introduced by the Government, passed the two Houses and became law. They were not brought up to the Upper House till the end of June;

and as at that period the state of his health prevented Bishop Blomfield from taking any share in the legislative business of the country, they call for mention in these pages, only on the ground of their forming part of a series of measures, tending, in their joint effect, to impair the influence of the Church upon the habits and feelings, the minds and morals of the people.

The next point of attack selected for this covert warfare against the Church was the education of the children of the poor. But before, in the opinion of the promoters of these successive aggressions, matters were ripe for giving battle to the Church on this ground, conflicts arose and events took place which claim our prior attention. On the last day of January, 1837, the session of Parliament was opened by Commission, and the speech from the throne contained, among others, an intimation of "His Majesty's desire that the Legislature should consult upon such further measures as might give increased stability to the Established Church, and promote concord and goodwill." This enigmatic, and, considering the quarter from which it emanated, ominous announcement, was explained by the mover of the address in the House of Commons as including *inter alia*, "the settlement of Church rates;" in further confirmation of which Mr. Spring Rice, afterwards Lord Monteagle, being then Chancellor of the Exchequer, gave notice of a motion relative to Church rates. It had, indeed, been understood for some time that there was an intention of turning part of a presumed surplus of the Church's revenues, to be realized by the proceedings of the Ecclesiastical Commission, to account as a substitute for church rates; the first indications of such an intention which transpired in the Commission of Inquiry, having been the cause of the refusal of the Episcopal Commissioners any longer to lend the sanction of their names to its Reports. It scarcely needed, there-

fore, the official announcement in Parliament, to rouse to action both the enemies and the friends of the Church throughout the country. The dissenters bestirred themselves in support of the measure which the Chancellor of the Exchequer was expected to propose. In their chapels and elsewhere they convened meetings, at which deputies were appointed for the purpose of attending a central gathering of the dissenting interest in the Metropolis. Upwards of four hundred of these delegates actually repaired to London; and petitions drawn up and signed by them, were presented to Parliament as exhibiting the dissenting mind of the country on the subject.

On the other hand the friends of the Church were not idle. A meeting was convened at the Freemasons' Hall on the 18th of February, over which Lord Ashley, now the Earl of Shaftesbury, presided. At this meeting a resolution was passed "deeply lamenting the inadequacy of the means of the Established Church to the entire fulfilment of its high and holy purposes, amidst the prodigiously increased and increasing masses of the population;" and asserting "the utter impossibility of providing by any internal arrangement of its own resources for this pressing exigency." On these grounds the meeting expressed its anxiety "that the Legislature should not only refuse to sanction measures for depriving the Church of any of its existing property or rights, but that it should also take immediate and effectual means to remedy the evils which, for the want of new churches, and of a corresponding increase of parochial ministers, were felt in so many parts of the kingdom." A petition to both houses of Parliament, in accordance with these sentiments, was agreed to, and numerous petitions of a similar character were sent up from all parts of the country. It was no secret, moreover, that the King was personally averse to this and other measures which his Ministers had announced in his name; and it was even stated that a communication on the

proposed Church-rate bill had been addressed by the Sovereign to the Archbishop of Canterbury. All this did not augur much success for the ministerial scheme, which, after several postponements, Mr. Spring Rice brought forward on the 3rd of March, in a Committee of the whole House, in the form of a resolution to the following effect:—
“That it is the opinion of this Committee that, for the repair and maintenance of parochial churches and chapels in England and Wales, and the due celebration of Divine worship therein, a permanent and adequate provision be made out of an increased value given to Church lands by the introduction of a new system of management, and by the application of the proceeds of pew-rents; the collecting of church-rates ceasing altogether, from a day to be determined by law; and that, in order to facilitate and give early effect to this resolution, the Commissioners of His Majesty’s Treasury be authorized to make advances on the security, and repayable out of the produce of such Church lands.”

Whilst this debate, which occupied four nights, and extended over a fortnight, was pending in the House of Commons, an incidental discussion on the subject was brought on in the Upper House on the presentation of petitions in favour of Church-rates by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, after a forcible exposure of the iniquity of the proposed scheme of spoliation, stated that a meeting of fifteen bishops, nearly all that were then in town, had been held that morning, and that he was “authorized by them to express their unanimous determination to resist the measure in contemplation by all proper and just means.” In conclusion the Primate complained that the names of “the Archbishop of Canterbury,” of the “Bishop of London,” and of “the Bishop of Llandaff,” as “Dean of St. Paul’s,” had been inserted in the ministerial draft among the names of the Commissioners under the proposed Bill, which had given rise to a notion that they

were privy to the plan, and that it had their approbation and concurrence. This the Archbishop emphatically denied, with a view "to relieve himself and the other right reverend prelates from the odium which so unfounded a misrepresentation was calculated to attach to them." This declaration on the part of the Archbishop drew from the Prime Minister an angry reply, in which he assailed the Episcopate in no measured terms, denouncing the course adopted by them as hostile to the peace of the community, and "not calculated to conciliate for them that respect, that reverence, which he should always wish to see them deserve and command." The Archbishop, in particular, he charged with having brought forward the subject "improperly and invidiously," at the instigation of "those who had more guile and deeper designs than himself." The Minister next entered into a defence of the scheme, and concluded by expressing, in a tone of haughty menace, his determination to persevere with the measure in spite of the opposition of the Episcopate.

As Lord Melbourne resumed his seat, Bishop Blomfield started to his feet. "And so, my Lords," exclaimed the indignant Prelate, "because a body of men speaking the sentiments of the clergy, who are so deeply interested in this question, and the sentiments of the laity, who feel their interests on this subject to be identified with those of the clergy, come forward and protest, mildly and respectfully, against this encroachment on the property of the Church, we are to be denounced with more than ordinary vehemence by the King's Prime Minister, and to be told that we are unmindful of the peace of the community, because we designate this measure as a sacrilegious act of spoliation. And when the Prime Minister tells us that this injury is to be committed in order to secure religious peace and harmony, we, the Bishops of the Church of England, are not to complain of it, because the 'only' sacrifice to be made is the sacrifice of that Protestant Church of which we

are the superior ministers!" The Bishop then proceeded to comment on some of the arguments advanced by Lord Melbourne in justification of the measure. "The noble Viscount says that the present state of things connected with the levy of church-rates is extremely scandalous; that the present dissensions of the community on that subject are most scandalous. I admit that all this is most scandalous; but to whom is it scandalous? Not to the Church, but to that small body of persons who now call upon you to release them from a burden which does not press heavily upon them, and subject to which they have inherited their property, well knowing all its liabilities. Peace! Such a measure produce peace, indeed! Does not the noble Viscount know that this measure never can produce peace? Is he so blind to the experience of the past as not to see that peace will never follow concessions made so absolutely at the expense of one party alone? Measure after measure have we passed in order to conciliate Ireland, and always under the promise that each of them, as it was yielded, would extinguish contention and promote peace: yet have not all invariably been made but substrata for further agitation, for the attainment of further demands? Have we not, I would ask your Lordships, the confession of those who are most prominent in promoting the abolition of Church rates, to guide us to their real object? Is it not their boast and their triumph, that this measure is only valuable to them as 'a first instalment?' Has not an influential member of their body, at a large meeting of Protestant Dissenters held in this metropolis, said: 'Only one step at a time: let us not meddle with other matters; for, at present, they are not relevant.' 'Not relevant?' said a Dissenting minister from Scotland, 'what do you mean? Does not this measure lead to the abolition of tithe as a necessary consequence?' The reply to this question was: 'Be prudent; only one step at a time.' Can we, then, either talk or

think of peace as the result of this measure of—I insist upon the phrase—sacrilegious spoliation?”

With reference to that part of the ministerial scheme which related to the improvement of ecclesiastical property, the Bishop stated that it had been considered and rejected as impracticable by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; and he concluded by the following reply to the appeal which Lord Melbourne had made to the Bishops as ministers of peace. “‘Ministers of peace,’ said the noble Viscount, ‘banded together to prevent the passing of a measure of peace.’ I deny most emphatically, on the part of myself and my right reverend brethren, that any part of our public conduct has rendered us liable to so unjust a charge; but it is undoubtedly our duty to prevent, if possible, the passing of a measure which is likely to be attended with so much detriment to the best interests of the Church as that which we have been discussing. I deny that any portion of the clergy, or that the public at large, consider this plan to be just. I am sure that by resisting this attack on the rights of the Church, we shall do more for the peace of the country than by pursuing any other course; for it will never tamely submit to such an act of spoliation as has been proposed. I do not speak merely for the interest of the clergy, for that is the last point to be considered on such a subject; but for the poor people of this country. There are two millions of poor people in England, who are without the means of religious instruction; and to what other source can they look for these means if the present plan be adopted? Should this measure pass, all hope of providing for the spiritual wants of two millions of our fellow-subjects will be at an end, and we shall be thrown eventually on the voluntary principle; and of that voluntary principle I will only say that, if it has succeeded at all in this country, it has succeeded mainly because there has been an Established Church maintained within it; and that

if the voluntary principle should ever prevail, there will assuredly be an end to the Church of England."

Within a week after this energetic remonstrance on the part of the Episcopate, the debate in the House of Commons on the resolution of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was brought to a close, and the result of the division was the affirmation of the resolution in Committee by a majority of 273 to 250. But when, in May, a second division was taken upon it, on the report of the Committee being brought up, the ministerial majority dwindled from 23 to 5, in a still fuller house, the numbers being 287 to 282.

Before the ministry had time to recover from the smart of the virtual defeat which they had thus suffered in their conflict with the Church, the King's last illness supervened. After the lapse of a week from the first attack, hopes were entertained of his recovery; but these hopes were soon dissipated by the appearance of more alarming symptoms. On the 20th of June, King William IV. expired at Windsor Castle; and the succession to the British throne devolved upon a youthful Princess who had only a few weeks before completed her eighteenth year.





CHAPTER XIV.

The Days of George III and of Queen Victoria—Altered Constitution of the Kingdom—An Established Church, but no State Religion—The Monarchy, a Republic in Disguise—Bloodless Revolution—Prospects of the Church in the New Reign—Coronation of Queen Victoria—Another Coronation Sermon—Tribute to the Memory of William IV—Mutual Obligations of Sovereign and People—Duties of Rulers—Their Religious Responsibility—Ancient Glories of a Female Reign—Sermon on the Duty of Prayer for Rulers—Special Temptations and Need of Intercession—Political Parties—Character of Lord Melbourne—Mentor and Major-Domo—Significant Symptoms—The Royal Dinner Table and Archbishop Howley—Patronage of Unitarianism—The Royal Closet and Bishop Stanley—Robert Owen at Court—The Duke of Sussex on Church Extension—The Coming Struggle.

VASTLY different was the kingdom to which Queen Victoria succeeded on the death of her royal uncle, from the inheritance transmitted to his sons by George III. *That* was a "United" Kingdom, not only by the union with England of Scotland and Ireland, but by the unity of principle on which its government was founded. The religious element was an important ingredient in its political constitution; all its institutions were pervaded by it. The Church was the basis on which the foundations of the State were laid; the Throne stood beside the Altar, from which it derived its sanction and chief authority, and to which, in return, it gave the pro-

tection and support of the regal power. Exceptional in its nature, as it was in its origin, and taking the form of a local immunity, the somewhat anomalous relation between the Crown and the Presbyterian Establishment in Scotland did not affect the essential character of the State, as a body professing a definite form of Christianity, and recognizing the Anglican branch of the Church Catholic as the national establishment for the maintenance of true religion in the land. While to every creed and form of worship the utmost freedom was accorded, that freedom was purely civil and personal; it was toleration, and nothing more. Instinct with the spirit of moderation and charity, which is inseparable from true Christianity, and which has ever characterised the Church in the best and purest periods of her history, the State refrained from exercising any compulsion or control over the religious convictions or practices of those of its subjects who differed from its religion: but the State had a religion of its own; and it entrusted with political power those only for whose allegiance to its own religious principles it had a guarantee. In this close union with the Church, the Regal power was held under her Divine Head as a sacred trust from the King of kings, whose vicegerent the Sovereign was, not only for the temporal government of the State, but for the external government of the Church. All the other powers in the State were, not in name only, but in fact, subordinate to "the King as supreme:" the Lords Spiritual and Temporal were, the former *ex officio*, as the Heads of the Church, the latter by hereditary right and dignity, the advisers of the Sovereign; the House of Commons was the assembly of the representatives of the people, attending upon the Sovereign by his command, for the purpose of conference and consultation upon the affairs of the kingdom, and the measures to be taken for the common weal: but both these assemblies, constituting together the Great Council of the nation, retained in every respect

the position and character of subjects, the utmost extent of their privileges going no further than to act as constitutional checks to prevent a despotic exercise of the power of the Crown.

When Queen Victoria ascended the throne, though the forms of this ancient constitution of the kingdom remained,—as, for the most part, they remain to this day,—unchanged, the substance of it was gone. There was still an Established Church, but the State had ceased to have a religion of its own. The theory of a “common Christianity,” under cover of which the members of every denomination of religionists retaining the Christian name had obtained admission to political power, had proved wholly nugatory as a principle of union or of action; there was no virtue in it to impress a positive character of religion upon the measures of the Government or the Legislature; but it had exercised a potent influence as a principle of negation. As such it had been successfully employed against the religious element in the constitution, by those whose object it was to give to the State a purely secular character, to exclude religion altogether from public affairs, and to reduce it to a mere matter of private and personal opinion and conduct.

Under this new aspect of the body politic the Church had sunk down,—not, indeed, in her indelible character as a branch of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, but in her position as a religious establishment,—to the level of a sect; a sect still powerful, because a numerical majority of the nation was attached to it, and because, by virtue of its parochial arrangements, it had territorial possession of the country; but on this very ground, as well as on account of its endowments and its dignities, regarded with continued envy and ill-will by those who had succeeded in deposing it from its former position of ascendancy. With the religious character of the State the principle of Divine authority, as inherent in the Regal power,

had insensibly evaporated. Loyalty had ceased to be cherished as a religious duty, disloyalty to be eschewed as a sin. The former had come to be regarded as a voluntary personal homage yielded to exalted rank by common consent, but liable to be withheld at the pleasure, and according to the taste, of the individual; the latter had settled down into a recognized form of political opinion, which had as much right to assert itself as any other political opinion or theory. The character of "God's Ordinance" was no longer a source of authority, the foundation of the "Supremacy" of the Crown: the sovereignty of the people had become the sole fountain of political power; the will of the people, as expressed by their representatives in the House of Commons, not the will of God, as collected from His Word, and from the living voice of His Church, had become the recognized rule for the guidance of the Government and the Legislature. The Royal supremacy, which once had claimed at the hands of the Church a reverent submission, and at the hands of all a religious allegiance, had become an instrument of tyranny, wielded against the Church by the Minister whom a majority of the democratic branch of the Legislature imposed upon the Crown. The wearer of the Crown,—a Sovereign still in name, but not in power,—from Vicegerent of the King of kings, had become the Chief Magistrate, the most exalted of the public servants of the people; invested with a personal inviolability, not because of the sacredness of "God's Anointed," but on the ground of political expediency. The irresponsibility of the Sovereign had become but another word for deprivation of power; ministerial responsibility but another word for the irresponsible exercise of power by a Minister who, being, under the title of a servant of the Crown, the creature and the tool of a House of Commons which had usurped all the substantive powers of the State, had no one to call him to account.

None of the States of modern Europe has,—even through the bloodiest convulsions which in this and the preceding age have shaken the foundations of society,—undergone a more complete revolution, a more effectual subversion of the basis, or a more radical change of the framework, of the body politic, than that which was brought about in this country by the mere reiteration of specious fallacies in the ears of a people intoxicated with success, and frantic in the pursuit of wealth, during the period which elapsed between the death of George III and the Accession of Queen Victoria. The principle of this revolution was fully established before that Princess ascended the throne of her ancestors: what remained to be done to complete the work, were mere matters of detail, logically deducible from the fundamental changes already accomplished. Add to this the tender age and inexperience of the successor to the throne, and it cannot be matter of surprise that a new complexion was at once given to the struggle which, during the reign of her two Royal uncles, had been going on between the ancient institutions of the country and the new-born spirit of innovation, and in which the interests of the Church, as the national institution for the maintenance and promotion of true religion were so deeply involved. Before, however, we enter upon this fresh phase in the history of that struggle, we shall follow the new Sovereign to the august ceremony which conferred the sanction of Heaven upon her Regal power.

It was on the 20th of June, 1838, that the massive portals of the ancient metropolitan Minster of St. Peter were once more thrown open for the coronation of a new Monarch; and, once more, Bishop Blomfield was the preacher of the day. He who, seven years before, when the successor to the Crown was a man far advanced in life, had, from the same pulpit so eloquently expounded the relative duties of rulers and subjects, was now called

upon to bring the truths and precepts of our holy religion to bear upon the same theme on the solemn consecration to the Kingly dignity of a Sovereign whose age and sex could not fail to render her investiture with so exalted an office a spectacle of more than common interest to every beholder, and a subject of fervent supplication on her behalf to every devout and thoughtful mind. That Bishop Blomfield himself was forcibly impressed with the contrast between the two occasions on which his ministrations were thus called into requisition, is evident from the feeling remarks in which he blended the tribute of honour and affection to the memory of the departed Monarch with his pious aspirations for the welfare of his youthful successor. "It is impossible," he observed, "for me to witness the recurrence of this solemnity, after so short an interval of time, without pausing for a moment to render the tribute of deserved respect to the memory of a Sovereign, the leading features of whose character, as King of this country, corresponded to the threefold requirements of God's Word,"—justice, mercy, and meekness, the points on which the Bishop had dwelt in his sermon. "An honest desire to do impartial justice to all his servants and subjects; a prompt and enlarged benevolence; a willing condescension and kindness; a careful observance of all the ordinances of religion; a sense of his own weakness and dependence upon God; and a reliance upon the merits of his Saviour, which consoled and supported him in the valley of the shadow of death,—these qualities, especially when viewed with reference to an education but ill-adapted to prepare him for the duties or the trials of Royalty, may well be remembered with an affectionate regret, softening, yet not impairing, the feelings of joyful exultation with which we hail the accession of a Princess, called to the seat of Imperial power in all the freshness and fulness of youthful hope and promise."

The Bishop selected his text,* with singular appropriateness to the occasion, from the incident in the history of "the young Josiah, the most pious and upright of the kings of Judah," when, standing by a pillar in the temple of the Lord, he, on his own behalf and on behalf of his people, entered into the solemn covenant, the object of which was "to bind both King and people by the formality of a public and united pledge to the performance of their duty as servants of the Most High God." Applying this to the mutual engagement between the Sovereign and the people, which forms part of the coronation ceremony, the Bishop entered upon a general consideration of the reciprocal obligations involved in that pledge, and addressed to the new Sovereign such faithful counsel and exhortation as befitted both her position and the office of God's minister. "We are," he said, "commanded in the Word of God, to 'submit ourselves' to our rulers 'for the Lord's sake,' as being 'his ministers to us for good.' Their claim to our obedience and respect is built on the deepest and firmest of all foundations: but the degree of readiness and affection with which that obedience is paid, will be proportioned to the desire which they evince to resemble Him from whom they hold their high commission, as the friends, and guides, and benefactors of mankind. If it be the office of a Christian teacher to inculcate the Divine authority of human governments, and the duty of a conscientious submission to 'the powers that be,' it is not less incumbent upon him to remind those who are invested with that authority, that they are set in the high places of the earth for the good of those beneath them; to diffuse, from their dazzling but fearful eminence, a salutary and purifying light over the whole range of society; to check the progress of evil, and to promote the growth of all that is good, by the influence of their example, even more

than by the exercise of their power. We are bound to tell them, that if God has done more for *them*, as to worldly things, than for the rest of mankind, they are thereby enabled, and will be expected, to do more for *Him*. If He has advanced them to the highest pinnacle of earthly grandeur, they are to advance His honour and glory, by the special means entrusted to them for that purpose. Of no other individual members of the whole family of mankind can it be said, with equal truth, that they live not for themselves alone, but for the weal or woe of others. Their virtues or their errors are not confined within the narrow precincts of a court, but are felt through the entire frame of society, in their effects upon the tastes, the morals, and the habits of the people at large.

“Nor is it, in general, so necessary to impress upon subjects the duty of obedience and respect to their rulers, as it is to recommend condescension and kindness on the part of rulers towards their subjects. They are too highly exalted, too completely removed from everything like competition or rivalry, to excite a feeling of envy in those beneath them; while the outward circumstances of their state, their power, and privileges, and the visible glory of their regality, will ensure submission and deference from the great bulk of mankind. But those very circumstances, added to an unlimited command over the sources of enjoyment, and the absence of contradiction and control, are but too likely to make them forget their essential equality, as moral and accountable agents, as servants of Jesus Christ, with those from whom they are so widely separated by the accident of birth. It is, therefore, the more important that they should be continually reminded of that word of Divine truth, which is not changed, nor weakened in its application, by any worldly distinctions whatsoever: ‘He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?’ Justice,

mercy, and meekness, as they are 'the weightier matters of the law,' and the fruits of a Christian faith, are the brightest gems in an earthly crown; and set off to unspeakable advantage the factitious ornaments of dignity and splendour."

More especially the Bishop insisted on the duty of national religion, as the only source of true and lasting national prosperity: "The Word of God, and the history of His providential government, warrant the conclusion, that religion is the true secret of national happiness and honour; and the religious state of every country must be greatly influenced by the religion of its rulers. 'Them that honour me,' saith the Lord, 'I will honour.' A steady adherence to the true faith; a determined upholding of that Church which is its depositary and dispenser; a devout use of all its means of grace; a living exemplification of its holy precepts, will bring down upon God's Anointed Servant an abundant measure of His blessing; will ensure to her,—and nothing else can ensure it,—a nation's abiding loyalty and love; and will revive, with augmented lustre, under His protection, the ancient but not forgotten glories of a female reign; the glories, not of outward magnificence, nor of successful war, nor of enlarged dominion: but the peaceful and durable glories of internal improvement and stability,—faction extinguished; dissensions healed; commerce extended; learning and the arts encouraged; the Church reformed and strengthened; the pure gospel preached to all the people of the land; and the consequent growth of everything that is 'lovely and of good report.'"

How earnestly solicitous the Bishop was for the religious character of the new reign,—a point on which, whatever might be the personal disposition of the Sovereign, the character of many of those by whom she was surrounded, and more especially of her official advisers, was anything but calculated to reassure men's minds,—and how deeply

he felt the need in which so young a Monarch, placed in so trying a position, must stand of the prayers of her people, is further apparent from the sermon on "the duty of prayer and intercession for our rulers," which, on the Sunday after the coronation, he preached at the parish church of St. James's, Westminster, and which he subsequently published and dedicated to the Queen. The argument of the sermon is founded upon St. Paul's exhortation* to intercessory prayer for all in authority. After calling attention to the character of those under whose rule the early Christians taught and practised this universal duty, and to the superior advantages enjoyed by both rulers and subjects under the influence of the Christian religion, the preacher enters upon a consideration of the weighty interests committed to rulers in a Christian State, and of the disadvantages and difficulties necessarily incident to their position. "But," he continues, "all these disadvantages, and difficulties, and cares, are of little moment, compared with the dangers which surround the wearer of a crown, considered as a servant of God, a steward of His household, a member of Christ's Church, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. How difficult to *them*, above all persons, must it be to realise the precept, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,' when the world so assiduously spreads all its most seductive temptations before them, and courts their enjoyment of its pleasures! With every wish anticipated, or gratified as soon as expressed; with an unrestricted command of all the resources of luxury and art; living within a fence of ceremony and observance, which the voice of truth can hardly penetrate, and even when heard at distant intervals, perhaps may shock by its unwonted and unwelcome sound;—how is it possible for *them* not to become 'lovers of pleasures more than lovers

* 1 Tim. ii. 1-3.

of God?’ How can they be brought to learn the peculiar lessons which *must* be learned by all the disciples of that Master who said, ‘Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart?’ What shall make them remember, that the noblest exercise of their high prerogatives will be, to bring their earthly crown, and lay it at the foot of the Cross; and to use the influence with which it invests them, to the advancement of their Saviour’s kingdom, and the eternal good of mankind? Who shall continually remind them, that the glories of their state will one day fade and perish; that the gorgeous robe, the sceptre, and the throne, must be exchanged for the shroud and the sepulchre? Who, in a word, can persuade them, in the midst of their power, and affluence, and splendour, habitually to retire within themselves, and to contemplate their state and prospects as sinners, and to ‘work out their salvation with fear and trembling;’ and to be earnest and diligent in seeking for a richer inheritance, ‘a kingdom which cannot be moved,’ and ‘a crown of glory that fadeth not away?’

“Who, we ask, can do all this? Our Saviour’s answer to His disciples, when they inquired how *any* rich man could be saved, must be ours. ‘With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.’ It *is* possible for His Holy Spirit to counteract every opposing influence, and to overcome all the obstacles, which make it so difficult for those who abound in the honours and treasures of this world, to be ‘rich towards God.’ He can cause the light of pure religion to burn as brightly on the highest worldly eminence, as it is wont to do in the more secluded vale of life; and can endow the mightiest Monarch with the graces of the lowliest Saint. This is indeed one of the noblest triumphs of His almighty power, as the sanctifier and enlightener of those whom the Eternal Son has redeemed by His precious blood; less splendid indeed in

degree, but the same in kind, as that which He achieved when the Holy Jesus rejected the price which was offered to Him for a dereliction of His great design, even 'the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them.' But if this be a work for the accomplishment of which the energies of that Holy Spirit Who 'helpeth our infirmities,' seem to be especially required, we may perceive a good reason why the Apostle should exhort us to make prayers and intercessions for Kings, and for all that are in authority; and it is the performance of this duty which I now more especially urge upon all those who hear me."

Thus, at the commencement of another important epoch in the history of our country and of its national Church, we find Bishop Blomfield at his post, as a faithful steward of the grace, and faithful messenger of the truth, of God, pointing the attention alike of the Monarch and the people, to the source of every blessing, the fountain of all true strength, the Giver of "every good and every perfect gift." And never were the counsels and admonitions of God's Minister more needed than at this critical juncture, when the occupation of the throne by a female Sovereign, whose tender years and inexperience placed her necessarily at the mercy of those by whom she found herself surrounded, afforded obvious facilities for completing the work of silent revolution already so far advanced. Of these facilities it was not likely that the active promoters of change would, under any circumstances, fail to take advantage; but, their game was rendered infinitely easier than it might otherwise have been, by the fact that when the demise of the Crown occurred, the Prime Minister in possession was a man as plausible as he was dangerous, combining in himself a number of personal qualifications which seemed to mark him out as pre-eminently fitted to become the political Mentor of the new Sovereign. Sufficiently advanced in years to take upon himself a

quasi paternal character in his intercourse with the youthful Queen; the most accomplished courtier of his day; an adroit and experienced politician; without fixed principles, and therefore without sternness of purpose; of an easy temperament, and of pleasant manners; gifted with great natural powers of fascination, and possessing the most varied attainments,—Lord Melbourne was the man of all others to insinuate himself into the confidence, and to pre-occupy the mind, of his Royal Mistress. He was the only man, probably, of that party whose persevering effort it had been to convert the kingdom into a republic under the form of a monarchy, and to combine a system of godless government with the maintenance of a Church establishment, that had tact enough to pour into the Royal ear the lessons incident to this new “constitutional” position of the Sovereign, without shocking the pride, alarming the fears, or even exciting the suspicions, of the wearer of the nominal Crown.

How the Church was likely to fare under the sway of such a Minister,—who, in addition to all the legitimate advantages which the course of events had thrown in his way, revived in his person, in contravention of all constitutional usages and traditions, the obsolete but influential office of major-domo,—soon became apparent. Various circumstances occurred, which, though trifling in themselves, were important when taken in connexion with the character of the times, and the tendencies of the men in power. One of the most significant of these was the treatment to which, at the Royal dinner-table itself, the Primate of all England was subjected. Having received a command to dine with the Queen, the Archbishop repaired to the palace; but on the announcement of dinner, the place which was his by right of precedence, and not that only, but several places below it, were pre-occupied. So marked, and evidently studied, was the affront offered to the Church in the person of her highest dignitary, that even Archbishop Howley, the

meekest and most unassuming of Prelates, felt it due to his position to remonstrate against the indignity, and to request that if his official character was not to be respected, he might for the future be relieved from the honour of a similar command. Another circumstance, much animadverted upon at the time, was the ostentatious display of the name of the Sovereign upon the title-page of an "Apostolical Harmony of the Gospels," professing to be "founded on the most ancient opinions respecting the duration of our Saviour's ministry," the production of a Unitarian preacher, and noted champion of the Unitarian tenets, who had obtained "permission" to dedicate it to Her Majesty. However unconsciously the Queen might have been betrayed into accepting the dedication of this book, this ostensible patronage, by her temporal governor, of the heresy which denies the Divinity of the Saviour, was felt to be an insult to the Church. The sense of this indignity was greatly aggravated when, soon after, it transpired that in the list of subscribers to a volume of sermons published by another well-known Unitarian preacher were paraded the names of two Bishops of the Church; and that one of these prelates—the other being Bishop Maltby of Durham—was Dr. Stanley, recently created Bishop of Norwich, who, by an unprecedented interference of the political Ministry with the ecclesiastical department of the Royal household, had been appointed Clerk of the Closet within a month after the commencement of the new reign. A still more flagrant outrage, committed, not against the Church alone, but against the cause of morality, and against Royalty itself, was the presentation by Lord Melbourne to the Queen in person of the infidel and socialist Robert Owen, who had long acquired an unenviable notoriety by his indecent attacks both upon the Christian religion and upon the institution of marriage, and by his general advocacy of principles subversive of all the foundations of society.

But the most marked of all the demonstrations of hostility to the Church, made by the men in power, was the repeated appearance of the Queen's uncle, the Duke of Sussex, who was at this time basking in the full sunshine of Court favour, as the chairman of meetings convened for the purpose of resisting the appropriation of a single shilling of public money to the important object of extending the ministrations of the Church, and thereby relieving the spiritual destitution, the existence of which had been so clearly demonstrated by the Ecclesiastical Commission of Inquiry.

From these and other similar indications of the spirit in which the advisers of the Crown were proposing to deal with the Church, it was becoming daily more evident that a decisive struggle was at hand. The friends of the Church banded themselves together in associations for her defence, while her enemies were sanguine as to the early accomplishment of their hostile designs.





CHAPTER XV.

The Education Question—Old Schemes and New Hopes—The London University—King's College—Lord Brougham's Education Bills—The Secular Educationists—Central Society of Education—Its Itinerant Agitation—Denounced by Bishop Blomfield—Sermon on National Education—The Chief Aim of all True Education—Value of Secular Knowledge—"The One Thing Needful"—The Bible and the Church—Religious Feeling of the Country—The Government Education Scheme—Committee of Council on Education—Project of a Latitudinarian Normal School—Discussion and Delays in Parliament—The Obnoxious Minute—"General Religion"—The Cabinet and the Apron-Strings of the Household—Meeting of the National Society—Bishop Blomfield's Speech—Educational Fallacies refuted—Religious Instruction indispensable—"Neutrality in Religion"—Distinctive Church Teaching—Without it no Christianity.

AMONG the schemes by which the enemies of the Church sought to effect their twofold purpose of reducing her to the level of a sect, and of secularizing the State, there was none that promised to be more effectual, none that was more ardently cherished by them than the endeavour to dislodge the Church from her influential position as the teacher of the rising generation. To accomplish this among the higher classes, the Church character of the universities had from the first been made the subject of attack; but as there appeared to be little prospect of success in that direction, the expedient of

establishing a university in the metropolis upon a non-religious basis had been resorted to; in the expectation—which, however, the event has hitherto disappointed—that its influence as an academic institution would at least form a counterpoise to that of the two Church universities. Bishop Blomfield, as has already been noted,* earnestly protested at the time against the principle on which the London University was founded; and not only did he protest in words, but by his sanction and active co-operation he contributed in no small measure to the success of the rival foundation of King's College, which, being established on a Church basis, was the most practical as well as effectual of all protests.

Years had rolled on since, during which Lord Brougham, one of the leading promoters of the Gower Street Institution,—subsequently reduced to the position of a college in what is now the London University,—was indefatigable in his endeavours to procure by legislative enactment, if not directly, at least indirectly, the deposition of the Church from her office as the teacher of the nation. Year after year did he introduce Bills into the Upper House of Parliament with this object; but so little encouragement did his schemes receive from that assembly, that he generally withdrew them himself in the course of the session. The prospects of extensive change which the new reign seemed to open to the opponents of the Church, revived the ardour of the secular educationists, and caused them to redouble their efforts. As a preliminary step to a parliamentary onslaught on the Establishment, it was determined to pursue a system of agitation throughout the country. A society calling itself the “Central Society of Education” had for some time been busy in disseminating secularist principles by a series of publications put forth under its auspices; and now that the time was thought to be ripe

* See above, pp. 54—56.

for action, some of the leading members of the society's committee, among whom was Mr. Wyse, a Papist, and member for Waterford, proceeded to hold meetings in support of their views in the provinces. This movement was attentively and jealously watched by Bishop Blomfield; and a petition, most numerous signed, in opposition to it, having been placed in his hands for presentation, the Bishop took the opportunity of exposing, in his place in Parliament, the whole of the designs of the Central Education Society. In calling attention to the system of education advocated by that body, the Bishop described it as "a system of education wholly and entirely secular," its rules "not permitting any instruction of a religious nature." "As a member of the Established Church," the Bishop said, "I deem it to be my imperative duty to lose no time in protesting against the attempt to establish such a system of education;" and after some further observations he concluded by expressing "his confident belief that the Christian people of this country were determined that, in this respect at least, the ancient custom of the land should suffer no alteration."

The accuracy of the description given by him of the designs of the Central Society having been disputed, the Bishop, a few days later, vindicated it by the following reference to the then recent proceedings of the leading members of the society: "I believe it is a fact that for the last six months the most prominent members of the Central Society of Education have been making the tour of the country, uttering vehement speeches from the platform to assembled multitudes; and it has been only in two or three instances, when they were admonished by the expressions of the feelings of the people, that they changed the tone of their addresses, which before were directed against the introduction of the Scriptures in the course of the system of education which they propose shall be adopted. When we find these gentlemen—men of stand-

ing in the country, some being Members of Parliament and barristers—advocating the cause of education as altogether detached from the Scriptures; and when we also see that these persons are members of the Central Society of Education, and editors of the works that emanate from the society, is it possible to avoid the inference that their object is to introduce a system of education unconnected with religious instruction? It is too plain for any man of common sense to doubt it."

These skirmishes, which formed the prelude to the coming conflict, took place shortly after the meeting of the first Parliament of the new reign. The Bishop's unsparing exposure of their designs, and the prospect of having to encounter uncompromising opposition, somewhat damped the ardour of the advocates of secular education; and Bishop Blomfield followed up his advantage by the publication of a sermon on national education, which he preached, in February 1838, at the parish church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, on behalf of the National Society for the Education of the Children of the Poor in the principles of the Established Church, in compliance with the Queen's Letter, then recently issued in favour of that society. In this sermon the Bishop set forth, with his usual simplicity and clearness of statement, the true objects of education, as understood and aimed at by the Church.

"We are desirous," he said, "of expanding, cultivating, storing the mind: but we are more solicitous about the training and preparation of the soul, by methods of God's own appointment. We bear in remembrance, that man is not only an intellectual being, but a moral agent; that he has passions to be tamed, and affections to be regulated and purified, as well as faculties to be sharpened; that conscience is of more value than memory; that it is of unspeakably greater moment to himself and others, that he should be taught the principles of Christian faith and duty, that he should be imbued with holy and charitable feel-

ings, that he should be formed to habits of virtue and industry, than that he should be enabled to penetrate the secrets of nature, enriched with the varied treasures of literature, or skilled in the mechanical arts. We remember that man was originally placed in this world to know and worship God; that he is fallen, and in danger of perishing; that he has a soul to be saved, as well as a mind to be enlightened; the one being the very end and object of his present life, the other but subsidiary thereto: and therefore knowing (if indeed we do know) the value of our own souls, and the methods of salvation which God has appointed, we are urged, by far higher and more constraining motives than the mere desire of promoting their usefulness as members of human society,—although that motive has its weight, and is quite compatible with higher views,—to take measures for bringing to God, through Christ, those who are perishing for lack of knowledge, the knowledge of His Gospel, and whose most urgent need is, of one who shall be to them at once a teacher and a Saviour.”

While thus insisting on the chief aim of all true education, Bishop Blomfield did not lose sight of, or undervalue, the collateral benefits which it was calculated to impart. “Undoubtedly,” he observed, “it is better—better for himself and for society—that a poor man, even if he be not truly religious, should spend his leisure hours in rational pursuits, in study, or experiment, or the exercise of mechanical skill, than that he should resort to the customary haunts of idleness and intemperance, to be the companion of the drunkard, the gambler, and the thief. His mind is at least kept in a posture of activity and wakefulness; it is not stupified, nor blunted by sensual indulgence; its tendencies are those of inquiry; his reason is accustomed to weigh the value of arguments; in short, the whole moral agent is in a state more consonant with the objects of his existence, more accessible to the proofs

and motives of religion, and more open to the operation of those means by which the Spirit of Truth may perform His work, and create him anew unto holiness, than the unhappy being in whom ignorance is fixed, and strengthened, and rendered impenetrable, by a long continuance in vice. It is therefore by no means unimportant to furnish the objects of our charitable care, where we have the means and opportunity of doing so, with the rudiments of that knowledge which *will* in fact be acquired, whether we desire it or not, by many of their equals and companions. Such knowledge, even if religion should fail of obtaining its proper influence over them, may be the means of preventing them from falling into the lowest depths of intellectual and moral degradation. But still we assert, that *this* is not to be the main and primary, much less the sole, object of our endeavours in educating the youth of this country, of whatever class they may be. It is not for this purpose that we feel it to be our duty to put forth the most strenuous efforts of Christian benevolence; and to call, with the authority of Christ's ambassadors, upon every one who prizes the privileges and blessings of his religion, or who is solicitous for the welfare and safety of his country, to become a fellow-labourer with us, who are more specially bound, and more directly commanded, to stretch out our hands, and to put the sickle into the great harvest of souls. That sickle, the implement by which alone the harvest can be reaped and gathered in, is the Bible; applied to the purposes for which it was given, by those who are commissioned to perform the task: and the garners into which the harvest must be gathered in, are those of the Church. These are the methods which God Himself has ordained for the salvation of mankind, for applying to individual sinners the benefits of that common redemption which Jesus Christ has purchased for all. Every man is in process of training and preparation for eternal life, from the very first

moment at which conscience makes itself heard, and a difference is perceived or felt between right and wrong. But eternal life is attainable only through Jesus Christ; and He is to be approached as a Saviour through His Word, which is the word of truth and life; and therefore it is that a knowledge of His Word, a practical knowledge of it, is the one thing needful for man. Many things, no doubt, there are which are useful to him as a denizen of this world; many things ornamental and agreeable; but this, we repeat it, is the one thing needful for him to know; and therefore the knowledge of it is the first object to be aimed at in the process of instruction; the Alpha and Omega of education. Give to your pupil, if you can, all the materials and resources of knowledge; expand his mind; sharpen his reasoning powers; elevate his tastes; multiply his resources: but do not forget that he has a soul to be saved; and that it will profit him nothing to place in his hand all the instruments and methods of self-advancement, or social usefulness, if you do not give him the means of becoming rich towards God, and of working out his own salvation."

The publication of the Bishop's sermon at this particular juncture, amounted in fact to an educational manifesto on the part of the Church. It had the effect of clearing the Church from the reproach which had been freely cast upon her by the spokesmen of the "Central Society of Education," of being hostile to the diffusion of knowledge among the lower classes; and it vindicated the motives of those who felt it their duty to resist all attempts to banish religion, and the positive dogmatic teaching of the Church, from the school-room. In the preface to his sermon the Bishop expressed himself with great confidence as to the strength of the position which, in his opinion, the Church occupied in reference to the work of national education. "I venture to say," he remarked, "that no sys-

tem of education can be forced upon the people at large, which shall not be in conformity with the principles of the Church of England, and worked by its instrumentality. It will be," he added, "our own fault if it be otherwise." And in the same spirit, in the charge which he delivered to his clergy in the autumn of that year, the Bishop called upon them to render every assistance in their power in the prosecution of the measures which had recently been devised by the committee of the National Society for giving a wider extent to the Society's operations, and increased efficiency to the system of education pursued in Church schools. "Upon the success of the efforts," the Bishop observed, "which are now to be made in behalf of the National Society, will mainly depend the decision of the question whether the education of the country is to be a religious education, and a Church education, conducted, as it has hitherto been, by the parochial clergy. I trust that you will give no countenance to any scheme, however plausible, which is not calculated to secure these objects."

The last observation seems to indicate that the Bishop had reason to believe that some plan was on the eve of being proposed, for effecting the object which the opponents of Church education had so much at heart; and that it was of a nature so specious, as to render it advisable to put the clergy on their guard against it. Such a scheme was, in fact, actually in course of preparation. Nothing had been done during the session of 1838, beyond the customary introduction and subsequent withdrawal of an Education Bill by Lord Brougham. But the ensuing session was destined to open with a deliberate attempt, made under the auspices of the Government itself, to transfer the educational functions and influence of the Church into the hands of the political ministry. The fact, that it was the intention of ministers to introduce a measure on the subject of National Education, had no sooner

transpired, than public meetings were held in several of the principal towns of the kingdom,—one, presided over by Lord Ashley, within a week of the opening of Parliament, in the metropolis itself,—for the purpose of giving expression to the public sentiment in favour of Church education. Three days after, on the 12th of February, Lord John Russell laid on the table of the Lower House copies of a correspondence between himself as Home Secretary, and the Marquis of Lansdowne, as President of the Council, which disclosed the intention of Ministers to form an Educational Board, consisting of five members of the Cabinet. In that Board they proposed to vest, for the prosecution of their own “less exclusive” plans of education, the annual Parliamentary grant for educational purposes, hitherto administered by the Lords of the Treasury, and applied to the promotion of popular education through the two Education Societies which represented the Church and the Dissenters, respectively,—the National Society and the British and Foreign School Society. The deliberate purpose of the Government, as explained in the correspondence, was to inaugurate an entirely new system of education, by the establishment of a Normal School for “literary and industrial” instruction, in which teachers were to be trained so as to enable them “to acquire, and to give, such religious instruction as might be required at all ordinary schools, in the principles of the Church of England;—but,” the ministerial programme continued, “without any exclusion of those who might be connected with such other religious persuasions as were known to prevail amongst a considerable portion of the population of the country, who might be desirous of, and should be enabled to receive, similar instruction from their own ministers.” A communication to the same effect was, two days after, made to the Upper House, by the Lord President, who stated that the measure about to be proposed was “not as extensive

as the members of the Government thought it ought to be," but was intended "rather to make a beginning, than to introduce a complete plan." The warm eulogies with which Lord Brougham welcomed the ministerial announcement in the House of Lords, and the withdrawal, by Mr. Wyse, of a motion which he had brought forward in former sessions, and had already given notice that he meant to renew in the present session, showed plainly enough that the parties who had laboured most actively for the promotion of the views of the Central Society of Education, considered the move of the Government as identical in substance with the object of their own endeavours. No further disclosure, however, of the details of the ministerial plan took place; and an attempt made by Lord Stanley (now the Earl of Derby), to extract information on the subject from Lord John Russell, proved abortive. The answer given was, that the subject would be proceeded with after the Easter recess. But Easter came, and still the ministerial plan remained veiled in mystery, until towards the end of April it transpired that an important minute had been agreed to by the newly constituted Committee of Council on Education. This minute was made the subject of inquiry, in the Lower House by Lord Stanley, and in the Upper House by Bishop Blomfield. The Bishop, who was evidently aware of its contents, in the course of his observations described it as "brief, but of great importance to the country at large;" and went on to observe, that the scheme had "all the vices of the Irish system of national Education, without the justification, or, rather, palliation, which might perhaps be found in the very peculiar and unfortunate circumstances of the sister island." He objected to it, as wholly uncalled for, independently of its questionable character, which he summed up in the following words: "It appears to me to involve the very essence of latitudinarianism, in attempting to comprise in one system—if sys-

tem it can be called—the religious instruction of all classes and denominations of children in this country ; and if it could in any degree answer the purpose intended, namely, the combination of these classes in one system of instruction, it would not be a system of religious instruction, but a system necessarily and inevitably leading to indifference, ultra-liberalism, and lastly to infidelity. If this principle were admitted by the legislature, the Church might as well not be connected with the State.”

After dilating on the absurdity and the mischief of introducing different religious teachers, and different versions of the Holy Scriptures into one and the same school, the Bishop went on to say, “It is supposed, indeed, that a kind of general religious instruction can be given, which will not trench on peculiar tenets ; but religious instruction which is not peculiar, and grounded on the interpretation of the Scriptures, does not, my Lords, deserve the name. It gives me great pain to be obliged to speak in this strong language on a system which is believed to be by its devisers,—the Committee of the Privy Council (if it be indeed devised by them)—to be calculated to promote the best interests of the country ; but I cannot help considering that such a system would prove the heaviest blow that has been struck at the religion of this country for many years. You cannot assail a more vital part of the Church, than by attacking her through the means of education. Unless I shall find further discussion rendered unnecessary by the result of the proceedings that may take place in the other House of Parliament, I shall bring the subject forward more distinctly, and more fully ; feeling as I do that it is the duty of the Church of England to protest against any system of education as entitled to be called “national,” which is not connected with the Established Church.”

Before the debate in the House of Commons, the issue

of which Bishop Blomfield had declared his intention to await, could be brought on, that unique episode in the constitutional history of England took place, when a Ministry, driven by Parliamentary failure to tender, or, at least to make a show of tendering, their resignation to the Sovereign, procured their return to office, after the lapse of four days, by the exceedingly simple, but novel contrivance of holding on by the apron-strings of the ladies of the household,—their own wives, sisters, and cousins. The ministers were only just recovering from the effects of this remarkable crisis in their official existence, when the Annual Meeting of the National Society afforded a legitimate opportunity of calling public attention to the education question. The meeting was held at Willis's Rooms, the Archbishop of Canterbury presiding on the occasion; and the crowded attendance sufficiently demonstrated how general was the interest taken in the subject with which the Society was called upon to deal. A number of resolutions were passed, expressive of adherence to the principles of the Society, and sanctioning the measures recently projected by its Committee; the principal of which were, the establishment of diocesan and local Boards of Education, and of a training school for teachers, as well as the encouragement of schools for the middle classes, in connection with the Society. The first of these resolutions, which affirmed the principle of "instruction in the truths and precepts of Christianity," to be imparted "under the superintendence of the Clergy, and in conformity with the doctrines of the Church," as "an essential part of every system of education intended for the people at large," was seconded by the Bishop of London, whose speech on the occasion possesses a permanent value, not only as a masterly exposition of the principles on which National Education ought to be conducted, but as a powerful refutation of the fallacies which, after the lapse of nearly twenty years, are once more obtruded

on the public ear, in support of a system of public instruction in which religion, though not excluded in terms, is to occupy a subordinate place, and to form a secondary consideration.

In addressing himself to these fallacies, the Bishop observed: "I need not, I am persuaded, employ many arguments in confutation of those, if such there be, who hold that religion is not an important part of education. There are few who are found to avow this principle in terms. We have to deal with opponents of a different stamp. The persons with whom we, at this time of day, have chiefly to contend, are those who, whilst they admit in words that religion is an important and advantageous element of education for the people, yet do not speak of it as if it were essential,—as if it were 'the one thing needful.' I allude to persons who have been exceedingly active during the last three or four years in disseminating their doctrines throughout the country. I speak of persons who, when they would construct a system of popular education, divide it into two different and distinct branches, the one secular, the other religious; making the one the substance of education, and the other its accident. I speak of persons who would provide one uniform system of secular instruction for the people, leaving the people to super-add (if they desire it), the religious part; or they themselves will provide a system of religious teaching, in some cases uniform, even as the barren surface of the desert is uniform; in other cases taught with such vagueness and generality, as to deprive it of those specific qualities which make it an instrument of sanctification and of truth; or still further, leaving it to the casual and desultory inculcation of teachers who are to bear no part in the main process of education.

"Against all projects of this kind we strenuously contend, and we hold that education for the people of a Christian country should be an education uniform and

undivided : that is to say, uniform as to its distinguishing principles, and its great leading features, though not as to all its minute details ; an education of which instruction in all those branches of knowledge which fit man for the duties and occupations of active life should form an important part, but which should make 'the one thing needful' to be instruction in the will of God, and in the means of its performance : the training of an accountable being, destined for immortality, by ways and methods of God's own appointment, for the enjoyment of his glorious inheritance. Entirely to separate religious instruction from all other kinds of instruction,—to make the latter the substance and the basis of education, the one subject of common consent, the one object of common interest,—and to thrust the former, religion, into bye-places and corners, leaving it to be, as I before said, inculcated by the desultory efforts of separate teachers, not bearing a part in the main process of education : what is this, I would ask, but to deprive religion of her due honours, to degrade her from her just supremacy ? what is it but to depreciate the worth, and to disparage the excellence, of 'the pearl of great price,' and to teach those who are the objects of instruction, to regard the best, the most valuable instruction of all, with indifference, if not with contempt ? No, my Lord ! we hold that religion, the religion of Christ Jesus, is to be intimately interwoven with the whole tissue of education ; that it is to be the one guiding, regulating, sanctifying principle ; that around which the whole system turns, moving in beautiful uniformity and order, each luminary of knowledge and of truth revolving in its own proper orbit, religion being the centre from which a genial and holy light may be diffused throughout every part. We protest then against the doctrines, and we are bound to resist the efforts, of those associated friends of education, to whom I have before made allusion, who argue for the entire exclusion of religion from the regular cycle of intel-

lectual instruction. We protest against the objects of all those who assert, (for it has been asserted in express terms,) that the exclusion of the Bible from what they term the "secular school," is a *sine quâ non* to the establishment of any general system of national education.

"I entirely agree in the truth of an assertion made by a very able advocate of education,* an opponent of the system to which I have alluded, and yet no friend to the system proposed by the National Society, when he says, that this is a scheme which 39-40ths of the religious portion of the community will strongly deprecate and resist. And if he speaks of the truly religious part of the population, I confess I cannot see why he should not have added the remaining fortieth. I say I entirely agree with that individual in the truth of this assertion. But *here* my agreement with him ends, and here ends the agreement of the National Society with the persons whom he represents: because *they* hold that it is enough, in order to ensure a sufficient education for the people, as a religious people, if they merely introduce the Bible into their schools as a class-book, at the same time prohibiting everything which might be construed into an interpretation of its doctrines. We, on the contrary, hold it not to be sufficient merely to retain the Bible, the material Bible, as a Class-book in our schools, if the Bible is to form the subject of instruction in its letter and its form only, and not in its doctrines and in its spirit. We all know what various, and, too often, what conflicting and opposite views of Scripture truth are taken by different persons, all of whom acknowledge the paramount authority of the Bible; but, there must be *one* system of doctrine which is the true system; or one, at least, which approximates nearer to the truth than any other, and which it is therefore most important that all should know. They talk, indeed, of neutrality in

* Mr. Dunn, the Secretary of the British and Foreign School Society.

religion! *Neutrality in religion!* To be neutral in religion (on the part of a religious teacher) is *treason* against the truth. I repeat it,—it is treason against the truth;—it is a dishonest betrayal of the sacred trust committed to his hands; because experience proves, if reason did not suggest the conclusion, that those who are brought up, as children, without a decided attachment to some particular form of religion, will grow up without attachment to any religion at all. I say also, that a religion without a creed, without some recognised and particular creed, is not the religion of common sense; it is not a practical religion; it is not the religion of the Church Catholic, nor of any branch of that Church. It was not the religion of the Holy Apostles themselves; for they strictly enjoined their converts to ‘hold fast the form of sound words.’ But if no interpretation whatever is to be put upon the words of the Bible read in a school,—and yet I might easily prove, (were it worth while to occupy your time with the proof,) that it is an impossible case (in the full sense of the term); for no teacher can read the Bible, or any particular version, without being, to a certain extent, an interpreter of the Bible:—but if such a case were possible, what would be the result? The poor child, the half-educated child, would be left to frame, for himself, each his own creed; and the result would be, that they would take different and conflicting views of saving truth, or, to speak more properly, no views at all,—no distinct, no rational views; and they would go forth to encounter the temptations of the world, the arts of evil and designing men, and the sophistry of unbelievers, with crude, indistinct, imperfect, inoperative views of religious truth, and of the real grounds of moral obligation. When, therefore, we contend, in the words of the resolution, ‘that instruction in the truths and precepts of Christianity ought to be an essential part of every education intended for the people at large,’ we mean instruction in the pecu-

liar truths and in the characteristic precepts of Christianity. I say, *peculiar* and *characteristic*. Christianity itself is an eminently peculiar religion—peculiar in its revelations, its precepts, its motives, its promises, and its hopes! Deprive Christianity of what is essentially peculiar to itself,—take away the doctrines of man's sinfulness and corruption, the necessity of an Atonement to be made by a Divine Saviour, justification through faith in that Saviour, sanctification by the Spirit unto obedience,—take away these doctrines, and the doctrines of the Sacrament of Grace, and what remains? *Not* CHRISTIANITY! not even a faint adumbration of Christianity; not even the *true* religion of a less perfect dispensation, but a mere *caput mortuum* of Deism, from which, when it has thus been passed through the alembic of a generalizing philosophy, you will scarcely, and with difficulty, extract a few residual grains of cold and spiritless morality, utterly ineffective and useless for the great purposes of right conduct and peace of mind in this life, much more for those of preparation for a better."





CHAPTER XVI.

The Education Question in Parliament—Debate in the House of Commons—Damaging Divisions—Archbishop Howley's Resolutions—Debate in the House of Lords—Bishop Stanley on Toleration—Bishop Blomfield's Reply—Real Aims of the Secular Education Movement—Indiscreet Disclosures—Educational Services of the Church—Character of Church Education—Results of Godless Education in France—The Established Church the Teacher of the Nation—Incompetency of the Government to undertake the Office—The Fantoccini Process—Mr. Kay Shuttleworth—Tolerant Conduct of the Church—Dissenters in Church Schools—Necessity of a Separate Education—Duty and Interest of the Government—Signal Victory achieved by the Bishops—Progress of the Educational Controversy—The National Society and the Committee of Council—Temporary Truce—Renewal of Hostilities—Conflicts within the National Society—Bishop Blomfield's Counsels of Peace—Schismatical Church Education Society—Diocesan Boards of Education—London Diocesan Board.

HET was not without a consciousness of the strength of the cause which he was advocating, that Bishop Blomfield thus threw down the gauntlet to the promoters of latitudinarian anti-Church education. The meeting at which he did so, took place on Tuesday the 28th of May; and on Friday the 14th of June, Lord John Russell brought the question before the House of Commons in the form of a vote of 30,000*l.* in the estimates of the year for educational purposes. The minute of the Com-

mittee of Council on Education of the 11th of April, containing the details of the Ministerial scheme, inclusive of the projected Normal school, and fully justifying the description given by Bishop Blomfield of its latitudinarian character, had in the mean time been communicated to Parliament; and Lord Stanley, who had taken charge of the question in the Lower House, brought on the discussion on the subject by proposing, as an amendment on the motion for going into committee of supply, an address to the Crown, praying that the obnoxious minute might be rescinded. After a protracted debate, which extended, by adjournment, over several days, Ministers carried the motion for going into committee of supply by a narrow majority of five, which, in the division on the grant itself, dwindled down to two. The time had now arrived for the Episcopate to oppose the Ministerial scheme in the Upper House. A series of resolutions, to be embodied in an address to the Crown, were prepared, and on the 5th of July moved by Archbishop Howley, in an unusually crowded House. The speech which Bishop Blomfield addressed to the House on this occasion, in support of the resolutions, was one of the most elaborate and forcible efforts of his parliamentary eloquence. He spoke immediately after Bishop Stanley of Norwich, who, in endeavouring to vindicate the Ministerial project, had expressed not only a wish "that all men might be brought to a community of religious sentiment," but a "hope that the Church of England might in time become as tolerant in practice as she was in theory." To this indirect attack upon the Church Bishop Blomfield replied by observing that "if there was a Church in the whole world which deserved the character of toleration in practice as well as in theory, it was the Church of England. Nay, my Lords," he continued, "I am by no means sure that she is not more tolerant in practice than in theory; I am not sure that toleration

has not been extended, in fact, further than is consistent with the Church's constitution." In reference to the question immediately before the House, the Bishop expressed a charitable hope that the Ministers who had brought forward this scheme were not themselves aware of its real objects and practical effects. "I frankly confess," he said, "that the measure before us is of such a nature, that it requires no trifling exercise of that charity which thinketh no evil, not to be suspicious of their motives. But I again declare, that I acquit them of any deliberate intention of bringing about the results which are to be apprehended from this scheme. I believe them to be acting under the advice, and from the impulse, of others whose intentions are less friendly to us than their own. I think they are in the hands of a party-hostile to the Church, and bent upon its destruction, who entertain the hope of securing their assistance, as instruments for carrying their own pernicious designs into effect. That there is such a party in the country, a party bent upon destroying its dearest and best institutions, is a fact which cannot have escaped the observation of your Lordships; a party not perhaps very numerous, certainly not very respectable; but active, sagacious, persevering in their endeavours; constantly at work about the very foundations of the Monarchy and the Church, and knowing perfectly well, that through the medium of the Church the Monarchy may be most successfully assailed; for if the Church falls, my Lords, all the other glorious and happy institutions of the country will follow; if ever the Church should be cast down, it will involve the Throne in its ruin. I speak advisedly, when I say that there is a party in the country entertaining these designs; seeking, without much attempt at concealment, to accomplish them; and intending to employ popular education as a most effective instrument for that purpose."

In support of this statement, as to the real objects

aimed at by those who pressed forward these new educational plans, the Bishop referred to the proceedings, not only of the "Central Society of Education," but of another society calling itself the "Society for promoting Religious Equality," which, in a document recently issued, had thus indiscreetly disclosed its ultimate aim: "On every hand," so ran the document, "the Church and State question meets the politician. It is the Tithe question in Ireland; the Church-extension question in Scotland; the *Church-rate question*, the *Education question*, and the *University question*, in England." After thus calling attention to the ultimate designs of the educational movement to which the Episcopate was then offering all the resistance in its power, Bishop Blomfield proceeded to vindicate the clergy from the imputation, which had been cast upon them during the debate, that they were inimical to the diffusion of knowledge; by showing, from statistical data, that while the Dissenters amounted, in the aggregate, to about one-sixth of the population, they did not educate more than one twenty-fourth of all the children of the poor then receiving instruction in dayschools; the great bulk of the instruction being imparted in the schools of the Church. "But," he observed, "it will be said, in answer to these statements, 'It is all very true; we admit the correctness of your numbers; we acknowledge that you have a great many schools, and a respectable roll-call of scholars; but what is the education which you give them? It is a worthless and bad education.'" The answer of the Bishop to this accusation is one of the most telling passages of his speech:—"When we proceed to inquire a little more particularly into the grounds of this charge, we find that the badness of our education consists principally in this, that we devote too much time, as they think, to religious instruction, to the study and explanation of the Bible, and too little to the objects of instructing the children of the poor in those

branches of secular knowledge, and those mechanical arts, which may be useful to them in after-life. My Lords, we are content to bear this imputation. We acknowledge that we hold the great object of education to be the training up of immortal beings, admitted by baptism into a special relation to their Maker, to a meetness for fulfilling the duties of that relation. We hold it to be more beneficial to *them*, and more incumbent upon *us*, to give them a knowledge of God and of themselves, of their duties and their destiny; to form their habits of thought and action by the rules of truth, and holiness, and charity, than to imbue them very deeply (and yet we would imbue them as deeply as a due attention to the more important object may permit) with that secular knowledge which they will be sure to acquire for themselves, if they find it to be serviceable in promoting their advancement in life, and securing to them the world's advantages; a knowledge which, if not sanctified and guided, in its use and application, by the restraints and motives of Christianity, may be,—nay, rather, my Lords, will be—a curse to them rather than a blessing. Yes, my Lords, I use the words deliberately and advisedly, a curse rather than a blessing. For let me not be told, that the acquisition of knowledge, of whatever kind, cannot under any circumstances be otherwise than beneficial to man as a reasonable being. If, my Lords, we bear in mind that man is not only a reasonable being, but that he is therefore a moral and accountable agent, we shall see that a broad ground is laid for restricting and qualifying that position. That the acquisition of knowledge, commonly so called,—*that* knowledge, which sharpens the wit of man, exercises his faculties, and stores his memory, while it leaves untouched the conscience and the heart,—that this does not of necessity benefit the person who acquires it, we learn by the testimony of fact. That education, unsanctified by religion, is evil in its tendencies, and

injurious in its results, is the conclusion of sound reason, confirmed by experience. What, my Lords, is the state of the case in France at the present moment? What are the fruits of that system which takes present utility, and not religious duty, for its mainspring and regulating principle? Do we see anything *there*, which should encourage us to give that prominence and value to mere secular education, which are given to it by the supporters of the Central Society? Many of your Lordships are probably acquainted with the Educational Statistics of M. Guerry, and with the extraordinary results of his very careful and minute inquiries; results which may well shake, if they do not overthrow, the confidence of those who look upon education, as they understand the term, as the grand panacea of all the evils, moral and political, by which the country is afflicted. His words are these:— ‘While crimes against the person are most frequent in Corsica, the provinces of the South-East, and Alsace, where the people are well instructed, there are the fewest of those crimes in Berri, Limousin, and Brittany, where the people are the most ignorant. And as for crimes against property, it is almost invariably those departments that are best informed which are the most criminal—a fact, which, if the tables be not altogether wrong, must show this to be certain, that if instruction do not increase crime, which may be a matter of dispute, there is no reason to believe that it diminishes it.’ It is strange, that the writer, who is an acute and sagacious person, should wholly overlook the cause of this surprising anomaly. It is at least strange that any Christian should overlook it. The cause is neither more nor less than this, that the education of which he speaks, is a purely secular education, wholly untinctured with religion.”

Similar results, the Bishop went on to show, had been produced by the severance of religion from education in the American States; after which he proceeded to deal

with the question how far the State was justified in interfering with the education of the people, with special reference to the circumstances of this country. "The question of the State's interference," he observed, "in the business of education, as far as our own country is concerned, is in a great degree settled and determined. The State has already interfered, legitimately as I think, and effectually, by establishing a National Church, a great instrument of education, which ought to conduct the whole process, as far as religion is concerned: for let us not forget that education is not the mere training of childhood and youth, but the continued teaching of an immortal being; and, therefore, it is not to be confined to the walls of a school, but is carried on in the Church. The clergyman is to continue what the schoolmaster has begun. The Church, then, in this country, is the only recognized medium of communicating religious knowledge to the people at large; and where there is an Established Church, the Legislature ought to embrace every fit opportunity of maintaining and extending the just influence of the clergy, as ministers of religion, due regard being had to complete toleration. . . . At least, my Lords, it is the duty of the Government, and I am sure it is its interest, not to do anything which may lessen and impair, much less destroy, the Church's efficiency. But this I am persuaded it will do, if it does that to which its advisers are urging it; namely, take the whole business of popular education out of the Church's hands into its own; appoint inspectors, choose schoolmasters, select school-books—in short, do everything but chastise the boys in person. My Lords, these are functions which the Government, as such, is not competent to undertake, in this country at least. It is not competent, either practically or constitutionally. It is not practically competent; for how is it possible that four or five political personages, holding office at the pleasure of the Crown, or, more

properly speaking, of the House of Commons, whose time and thoughts are of necessity occupied with far different matters, whose habits of life are not likely to have been such as to qualify them for so delicate and difficult an office, should exercise their functions, as superintendents of general education, with all the knowledge and all the discretion requisite for such a task? and what security have we for anything like permanency of principle, or consistency of operation, in such a body? Will they not, of necessity, be acted upon, and moved as puppets, by a few artful and designing persons behind the scenes, who will pull the strings from time to time, and make the Privy Councillors gesticulate, and excite the mirth or the sorrow of the bystanders; and will themselves do all the mischief, without incurring any of the responsibility? If this be not the case, if they are not mere tools in the hands of a party, active but unseen, there is yet an alternative. The functions which they cannot perform themselves, they will delegate to their secretary, who will thus become the sole arbiter and director of popular education. And what security have we that their secretary shall be a member of the Established Church: that he will not be a Socinian, or a Roman Catholic; nay, what security have we for his being a Christian? My Lords, I would not speak disrespectfully of any of Her Majesty's Privy Councillors, and I hope I may not have given offence by the comparison which I have made; but it is forced upon me by the symptoms, which I think I have already discovered, of this fantoccini process, in the recent movements of the Committee of Privy Council." The allusions in the latter part of these observations were aimed at an individual who had then, already, made himself conspicuous in the prosecution of the educational schemes which the Bishop was combating, and who by the disingenuous conduct pursued by him in his official capacity as Secretary of the Committee of Council on Education towards the managers

of Church schools, contributed so largely to the mutual distrust and irritation which sprang up subsequently between the Church and the Educational Committee of Privy Council, and which for a number of years proved a serious impediment to the more general diffusion of the benefits of popular education.

In discussing the practicability of educating, in one and the same school, children belonging to parents of different creeds, the Bishop made the following sagacious remarks, for the purpose of showing that those who attempted to force upon the Church a latitudinarian principle of education, were, in reality, defeating their own object. "It was not impossible," he said, "even with an adherence to those principles for which he contended, to educate in the same schools the children of Churchmen and Dissenters. I have," he continued, "had some experience in the management of schools, both in the country and in the metropolis; and my experience has taught me that such a joint and common education in Church schools is by no means impracticable, under discreet and judicious management. I have myself had the principal direction of a large National school, in which children of every denomination, Jews not excluded, were receiving education. I know that it requires judgment and kindness to maintain that state of things; but it is possible to avoid giving offence to reasonable Dissenters without compromising any important principle of the Church; and in the case to which I allude the Dissenters were content to leave their children in our hands, satisfied, in general, that the essential truths of their own creeds would be taught in every school which was in connection with the Church of England. If anything be calculated to put an end to this state of things, and to render it impossible to give a common education to the children of parents who belong to the Church, and to those who differ from it, I think it is the conduct of those who are perpetually charging the

Church with bigotry and intolerance, or with the inculcation of false doctrine, and who may thus impose upon us the necessity of asserting more strongly our own principles and rights, and of drawing more tight those bands of discipline which we have to a certain degree relaxed, in some instances, for the sake of bringing the children of all denominations within the Church's beneficial influence. If such be the result, we must come at last to a separate education."

That the necessity of a separate education would arise, Bishop Blomfield clearly foresaw; and, taking into account all the difficulties by which the subject was surrounded, he arrived at the following conclusion, the wisdom as well as justice of which all that has since occurred in reference to the education question has tended to confirm: "The State, having delegated its functions to the Church, as far as the religious education of the people is concerned, is not competent to resume them, nor to intrust them to any other body, except by a deliberate and solemn act of the Legislature in all its three estates. In asserting this, I do not claim for the Church the right of educating any other children than those of her own communion. I do maintain that she is, by the constitution of the country, the established and recognized organ of religious education; and she ought to have sufficient means for the discharge of her functions. If there be any, and many, no doubt, there are, who refuse to accept the education we offer them, let them seek instruction according to their own views and methods. Let them even be assisted by the State, if the necessity should arise; but let it be done in the way of charity to the dissidents from our Church, not as a matter of right: at all events, let it not be so done as to make it appear to the people that the Government withholds its confidence from the Church, and is desirous of withdrawing from its parental care and teaching those who might, under that care, be brought

up as its intelligent and attached members, but, under a different system, will become its prejudiced and dangerous foes. It is chiefly, though not entirely, because the Government plan is calculated to disparage and weaken the Church, that I so strongly disapprove of it."

The disapprobation, thus forcibly expressed, of the Heads of the Church, proved fatal to the ministerial measure. The Bishops, who, only seven years before, had been held up to the public as objects of "universal detestation," and, whose seats in the Upper House, as Members of the Legislature, had been more than once violently assailed, defeated the Ministers who had forced their Reform Bill upon the Crown and the House of Peers, by a majority of nearly two to one—the numbers being 229 to 118—upon a question in comparison with which, as regards its influence on the stability of the monarchy and the character of the nation, even the question of Parliamentary Reform sinks into insignificance.

It would be foreign to the object of these pages to give more than a brief summary of the various phases through which the educational controversy between the Church and the State, as represented by the Committee of Council, has passed during the eighteen years which have elapsed since that memorable victory was achieved on behalf of the Church by her Episcopate. The obnoxious Minute, against which the Archbishop's resolutions were directed, was, indeed, withdrawn: but constant attempts were made to deprive the Church of the fruits of her victory by a system of petty encroachment brought to bear upon clergymen and managers of Church schools who were applicants for assistance from the Parliamentary grant. In the first instance these attempts were defeated by the firmness and vigilance of the Rev. John Sinclair, now the Archdeacon of Middlesex, who, having been appointed, in the autumn of 1839, Secretary of the National Society,

made it his first business to relieve the clergy from the position of embarrassment in which many of them had been placed by the conditions arbitrarily annexed by the Committee of Council to its grants. By the decisive steps which he took, he succeeded in protecting the Church, through the medium of the Committee of the National Society, from the insidious machinations of the Secretary of the Committee of Council, who, in his subordinate position, had assumed to himself large and irresponsible powers, as *quasi* Minister of public instruction. Negotiations were entered into between the Committee of Council and the Committee of the National Society, which resulted in a compact between a deputation of the last-named body and the Lord President, defining the action of the Committee of Council with regard to Church schools in a manner calculated to secure to the latter their liberty of distinctive Church teaching. This compact, it was arranged at the time, was to have been embodied in a Minute of the Committee of Council; but this stipulation was evaded, the Lord President subsequently expressing a strong desire that the Minute should not be insisted on, but that the Committee of the National Society should rest satisfied with the mutual understanding verbally established between the parties. Shortly after the conclusion of this precarious truce, the Ministry of Lord Melbourne was driven from office by a direct vote of want of confidence in the House of Commons, followed, after a dissolution, by a large adverse majority in the Parliament elected, under its own auspices, in the summer of 1841. The administration which succeeded being friendly to the Church, and possessing her confidence, the extension and improvement of Church schools with the aid of grants from the Committee of Council went on harmoniously for several years; but on the return to office of the Whigs under the Premiership of Lord John Russell, in 1846, the system of insidious aggression, which had been

kept in abeyance, was again resorted to. An attempt was made to enforce on Church schools, as a *sine qua non* of participation in the Parliamentary education grant, the insertion into their trust deeds of management clauses inimical to the legitimate influence and control of the clergy over their parochial schools; and this, together with the adoption of other Minutes of an objectionable character, as well as the publication by Mr. Kay Shuttleworth of a semi-official pamphlet hostile to the Church in its tendency, caused the flame of controversy to break out afresh, and to burn more fiercely than ever.

Unhappily for the Church the Committee of the National Society had given an unguarded, though qualified, approbation to the management clauses, understanding them to be merely offered as suggestions, not imposed as conditions of participation in the Parliamentary grant. In consequence of this oversight the scene of the controversy was, for a time, transferred to the meetings of the National Society itself. In 1849 an almost unanimous vote of the members of the Society, who had assembled in unusual numbers, affirmed the proposition that "no terms of co-operation with the State can be satisfactory, which shall not allow to the clergy and laity full freedom to constitute schools upon such principles and models as are both sanctioned and commended by the order and the practice of the Church of England; and, in particular, where they shall so desire it, to put the management of their schools solely in the clergyman of their parish and the Bishop of the diocese." To follow up this manifestation of the Church's mind upon the question, and to support the Committee of the National Society in their struggle for the educational rights of the Church, a Committee of churchmen was formed in London, whose special business it was to watch the progress of the education question. Under the auspices of this Committee a large meeting was convened at Willis's Rooms, in February

1850, at which resolutions were passed condemnatory of the constitution and proceedings of the Committee of Council generally, and specifically of the management clauses, and of the Normal School then recently opened at Kneller Hall, on the very principles so emphatically condemned by Parliament in the year 1839. Once more the energies of the Church were concentrated upon this vital point, and the moral effect produced was such as to prove fatal to a secular Education Bill introduced into the Lower House at the beginning of the session, and to strangle the latitudinarian seminary at Kneller Hall in its cradle. With a view to allay the excitement which had been created in the public mind, the Bishop of London, supported by other members of the Episcopal Bench, now pressed upon the Government the necessity of a Select Committee of inquiry into the practical working of the Committee of Council. A formal motion to that effect, by the Earl of Harrowby, in July of the same year, was unsuccessful, the advanced period of the session being made a plea for the refusal; but a promise was held out to the supporters of Church education that in a future session the inquiry should be instituted.

It was the misfortune of the Church that at this very time the doctrinal differences which had for some years disturbed her peace, assumed an aggravated character; the consequence of which was that the annual meeting of the National Society in 1851, was selected by the two extreme sections of the Church as a field-day for measuring their respective strength. In anticipation of this suicidal contest, the more moderate among the advocates of Church education prepared an address deprecating hostile encounters within the Society, and expressing confidence in its Committee; and when the resolution and amendment of the contending parties—the former proposed by the Rev. G. A. Denison, now Archdeacon of

Taunton, the latter by Sir John Pakington—were about to be put to the vote, the Bishop of London interposed, and, in the spirit of the address presented to the Committee, besought the meeting to discontinue these internal feuds. "None," the Bishop observed, "but those who had acted upon the Committee could be aware of their painful and difficult situation during the last three years: but none who had taken note of their proceedings would fail to do justice to the impartiality and candour with which they had endeavoured to accommodate the differences between applicants for aid and the Committee of Council, and to do the best they could for the Church without running a risk of collision between the two great powers of the country, which he ventured to say would be fatal to one of them. Gentlemen, and my Reverend Brethren," the Bishop added with great emphasis, "I do earnestly exhort you to put a stop to these discussions in future, by distinctly rejecting both the resolution and the amendment." The appeal thus made by the Bishop was followed by the withdrawal of the amendment, and on Mr. Denison's refusal to take the same course, the meeting testified its concurrence in the views expressed by the Bishop by rejecting the proposition forced upon its decision by an overwhelming majority.

The success which thus attended the Bishop's interposition in the interests of peace and harmony, was followed soon after by another auspicious circumstance. Early in the following year the Ministry of Lord John Russell fell to pieces, and the administration which succeeded it, attested its respect for the rights of the Church, and its sense of the value of her services in the cause of education, by the adoption of a Minute, on the part of the new Committee of Council, which was calculated to satisfy the reasonable demands of churchmen. These fair prospects, however, were not of long duration. The fall of Lord Derby's administration, at the close of the year 1852,

paved the way for the return to office of the originators of the anti-Church education movement: the Minute adopted by the Committee of Council under the Conservative Government, was cancelled, and a new Minute framed, which replaced the relations between the Church and the Committee of Council on the former unsatisfactory footing. Within the National Society itself, likewise, the temporary lull of party-conflict proved only the forerunner of an open separation. Dissatisfied with his position in the Committee, where he was in a decided minority, and having no reason to anticipate his re-election when his turn to go out in rotation should arrive, Mr. Colquhoun tendered his resignation in July 1852; and early in the following year he reappeared before the public as the founder of a rival society, which, as regardless of honesty as it had proved itself of peace, arrogated to itself the name of "*THE Church of England Education Society.*" The injury thus done to the cause of Church education was aggravated in the same year by a violent outcry, raised by the promoters of the new society, against the customary issue of a Royal Letter in favour of the old Established Church Education Society; an outcry of which, three years later, the political adversaries of the Church took advantage for the purpose of discontinuing altogether the issue of Royal Letters in favour of Church Societies, and thus adding one more to the many and gradually accumulating proofs of a settled determination to depose the Church of England from her position as the National Church.

It is some consolation, amidst the sad results of party animosity which it has been our painful duty to record, to find that under all the disadvantages entailed upon it by the severe struggle which the Church has had to sustain in defence of her position as the teacher of the nation, the work of Church education has steadily and silently progressed. While many clergymen and managers of

Church schools have kept, and continue to keep, aloof from the Committee of Council, through an unwillingness to place their freedom of action, and their liberty of distinctive Church-teaching, in jeopardy for the sake of the pecuniary advantage of participation in the Parliamentary grant, many more have accepted, and continue to receive, aid from the Committee of Council, and are thereby enabled to bring the benefits of Church education to bear upon large masses of the population, for which those benefits could not have been secured without such assistance. The guardianship too, which was originally exercised by the National Society over the Church education of the country, is to a great extent superseded by a more strictly ecclesiastical organization,—the establishment of Diocesan Boards of Education. This important measure was originally suggested by the Committee of the National Society, and formally adopted at the important Meeting held in 1839, on the eve of the great Parliamentary struggle of that year.* Bishop Blomfield, who took an active part in originating it, lost no time in setting the example of such an organization in his own diocese. In the course of June, 1839, he convened a meeting of clergy and distinguished laymen of the diocese, whose co-operation he invited and obtained, in the formation of a "London Diocesan Board of Education." The objects contemplated at its formation were, to afford an opportunity for mutual communication to the friends of Church education in the diocese; to collect, and to circulate, information as to the actual state of the diocese in respect of education; to promote the establishment and the improvement of schools, where needed; to form a centre of union for existing schools on terms similar to the terms of union proposed by the National Society; to organize, under the sanction of the Bishop, an efficient

* See p. 245.

system of inspection and periodical examination ; to promote the training of properly qualified masters and mistresses ; and to establish, or take into union, schools for the middle classes, so as to secure their being conducted on the principles of the Church.

Though formally constituted with a view to this wide range of objects, the Diocesan Board of Education was, however, as regards the extent of its operations, necessarily dependent upon the amount of the funds which it might be enabled to raise. These were at no time superabundant ; and it is certainly far from creditable to the wealthiest city in the world, that its Bishop, — while setting personally the example of liberality, by an annual subscription of 25*l.*—should have been unable to obtain from the members of the Church, for the educational wants of his diocese, more than a paltry sum of not quite 400*l.* per annum, on an average of the eighteen years which have elapsed since the formation of the Board. The commencement, indeed, was more promising ; the subscriptions for the first year reaching to nearly 900*l.* ; and the average income for the first five years exceeding 500*l.* From that time, the income of the Board gradually diminished, till it dwindled down to 239*l.* in the year 1852-3 ; since which it has again slightly increased, realizing an average of rather more than 300*l.* In some measure, probably, the decrease observable after the fifth year is to be attributed to the contraction of the operations of the Board, which reacted upon its funds. One important object which has engaged the attention of other Diocesan Boards, and called forth the liberality of their supporters,—the establishment and maintenance of a Training School,—was, in the case of the metropolis, superseded by the foundation, in the very same year with the Diocesan Board, of the Training School of the National Society ; and as regards this branch of its operations, all that the London Diocesan Board ever was called upon, or attempted

to do, was to maintain, wholly or in part, candidates for the teacher's office, selected from the schools in connexion with it. Another important branch of the contemplated operations of the Board, the inspection of schools throughout the diocese, fell into abeyance after the fourth year, in consequence of the appointment of the Rev. F. C. Cooke, who discharged the joint-functions of Secretary and Inspector, to the office of Inspector of Schools under the Committee of Privy Council. As most of the schools connected with the Diocesan Board were under inspection by the Committee of Council, this secured to the Board the seeming advantage of obtaining an inspection of its schools without being at the expense of an Inspector, and enabled it to place the management of its affairs in the hands of an Honorary Secretary. The prominent part taken by the gentleman selected for that post in the internal feuds which inflicted such serious injury on the National Society, was doubtless not without its influence in alienating from the Board the class of Churchmen most likely to give their support to a Diocesan organization, as more consistent than any other with ecclesiastical principles. Similar causes appear to have operated against a plan which the Bishop took up very warmly, in the year 1845,—the formation of a Metropolis Schools Fund, to be kept distinct from the General Fund of the Education Board, though under the same management. The object of this was to provide additional school accommodation for the most destitute classes of children, of whom it was calculated that there were from 50,000 to 60,000 in the metropolis. In the first instance the erection or purchase of fifty schools was proposed; and the Bishop, by a contribution of 500*l.*, showed that he contemplated a movement analogous to the Metropolis Churches Fund. But the total amount of the contributions towards this object did not exceed 2,500*l.*; and with this, the utmost that could be achieved, was to provide school-room for

12,000 children ; no small gain, it is true, in itself, yet miserably inadequate, whether regard be had to the wants, or to the resources, of the metropolis.

Notwithstanding, however, the very moderate degree of success which attended the efforts of the London Diocesan Board, the establishment of such an organization was an important service rendered to the diocese, and to the Church at large ; and it is far from improbable that the time is only now arriving, when its beneficial effects will be fully developed. While already, since the resumption of its original function of Diocesan inspection, there is a marked improvement in the amount of support which the Board has received, it is obvious at the same time, that a Diocesan Board established under the sanction, and acting under the immediate personal direction of the Bishop, has a claim to recognition, and consequent facilities for dealing with such a body as the Committee of Council on Education, which, in the nature of things, neither the individual clergyman, nor yet a voluntary association like the National Society, can possibly command.

The Education question cannot remain in the unsettled state in which it is at present ; and whenever a legislative adjustment of it shall be attempted, the existence of a number of Diocesan Boards, representing the schools of their Dioceses, and responsible for the character of the education imparted in them, cannot fail to be an important help towards a settlement of the relations between the Church and the State, in the matter of education, on those sound and equitable principles of which, throughout the discussions which have taken place on this delicate and thorny subject, Bishop Blomfield proved himself the able and consistent advocate.





CHAPTER XVII.

The Church of England and the World—Cosmopolitan Jurisdiction of the See of London—The Colonial Church—Bishop Blomfield's Views of Episcopal Work—Subdivision of Colonial Dioceses—Importance of sustaining the Church in the Colonies—No Episcopal Church without a Bishop—Colonial Bishops' Fund—Bishop Blomfield's Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury—Hopelessness of State Assistance—Poverty of the Colonies—Duties of the Mother Church—Change in Missionary Operations—Catholic Views and Aspirations—Great Church Meeting—Bishop Blomfield's Speech—Responsibility of the Church and of her Members—The Church of England a Missionary Church—Result of the Colonial Bishops' Fund.

EVER since the return of the Whigs to power, under the Premiership of Lord Melbourne, after the overthrow of Sir Robert Peel's short-lived Administration under King William IV., we have seen Bishop Blomfield engaged on the one hand in fighting the battles of the Church against State encroachment, and on the other hand in promoting her efficiency within his own diocese, both by multiplying churches, and with them the means of grace, and by giving to the work of Church education a diocesan character. But in the midst of these political conflicts, and diocesan labours, he did not lose sight of the interests, of the requirements, and the opportunities of the Church of England on the wider stage of

the world. In one sense, indeed, it may be said that in doing so Bishop Blomfield did not outstep the limits of his own specific duties; for, according to a prescriptive custom,—the origin of which is enveloped in obscurity, while its anomaly is patent,—the incumbent of the See of London had, in a manner, the world for his diocese. Wherever, all over the globe, there was an English clergyman who was in no particular diocese, and consequently under no particular Bishop, he was considered to be under the cosmopolitan jurisdiction of the Bishop of London. That this extra-diocesan episcopate was not an insignificant addition to the already heavy charge devolving on the Bishop of the British Metropolis, may easily be conceived. "I have," Bishop Blomfield himself observed, in speaking of this anomalous jurisdiction, "references continually made to me upon matters of great importance to the cause of religion and the Church, from English clergymen and congregations in foreign parts, which I am obliged to settle as well as I can, without any legitimate jurisdiction over the parties, and without any means of inquiring personally into the facts which form the subjects of their appeals to me." To a mind like that of Bishop Blomfield, who, on entering on the episcopal office, had laid it down to himself, as "the safest rule" for one in authority, "strictly to observe the *laws* which define and prescribe his duties," the exercise of an authority undefined by any laws whatever, could not be otherwise than singularly distasteful; and, deeply impressed as he was with the value and importance of ecclesiastical order, it must have been difficult for him to reconcile his mind to a state of things based upon the entire absence of that order. "The jurisdiction," he again remarked, "exercised in former times over the colonies by the Bishop of London, and still conventionally exercised by him over those clergymen of the English Church who have no Bishop of their own, is an anomaly.

lous and very inadequate substitute for the practical authority of a diocesan Bishop, residing amongst and superintending his own clergy, and giving unity, consistency, and efficiency, to their pastoral labours."

At the date of Bishop Blomfield's translation from Chester to the See of London, the area over which this irregular jurisdiction extended, was immense. Throughout the wide range of the British possessions in foreign parts, there did not at that time exist more than five colonial bishoprics,—two, the Bishoprics of Nova Scotia and Quebec, in the North American settlements; one in the vast Indian Empire in the East; and two in the West Indian Islands, having their Sees, respectively, in Jamaica and Barbadoes. All the rest of the British possessions abroad, together with all the English settlements in countries not subject to the British Crown, were thrown in, as a kind of makeweight, to the episcopal charge of the incumbent of the See of London, whose multiplied and pressing duties assuredly did not require such an addition. During the first ten years of his London episcopate Bishop Blomfield sustained this heavy burden in the spirit of the observations made by him in the debate on the Irish Church Temporalities Bill, in answer to the objections taken to that measure on the ground of the additional work which it would impose on the Bishops of the consolidated dioceses. "Although," he said, "as Bishop of London I have nearly as much upon my hands as I can perform with satisfaction to myself or advantage to the Church, still, if the general interests of that Church required it, I should not murmur at being called upon to undertake an additional burden; and the fact is," he continued, in allusion to the addition of a quarter of a million of souls then about to be made to his diocese by the abolition of peculiar and exempt jurisdictions, "that I anxiously wish, as do also others of my brethren, that we may be so called upon."

One who took this view of episcopal work, was not, it is true, likely to make much exertion for the purpose of relieving himself of a burden unfairly thrust upon him : but there were other considerations which forbade Bishop Blomfield's continued acquiescence in the exercise of an authority which was neither legitimate nor efficient ; and the progress of events in the few provinces which were placed under regular episcopal superintendence, tended to confirm him in his conviction of the necessity of some comprehensive change. Repeated representations were addressed by the several colonial Bishops to the authorities at home, in both Church and State, pressing for a subdivision of their dioceses, on the ground of their inability to exercise efficient superintendence over the extensive territories placed under their charge ; and these representations led to the establishment of two additional bishoprics in India,—Madras in 1835, and Bombay in 1837 ; and, two years later, to the division of the diocese of Nova Scotia and Quebec, by the erection of the new Sees of Newfoundland and Toronto. The discussions to which these measures gave rise among the Bishops at home, and between them and the Government, were calculated to direct Bishop Blomfield's attention, more forcibly even than the occasional appeals to his authority from bishopless clergymen and congregations, to the many inconveniences and the serious evils of inadequate episcopal superintendence over the outlying settlements, the outposts, so to speak, of the English Church in every quarter of the globe. If it was evident that even in those parts where a regular episcopate was constituted, large additions must be made to it before its beneficial effects could make themselves fully felt, the urgency of providing such an episcopate in parts where it was wholly wanting, was still more evident. The duty which devolved upon this country, of giving to her colonization a religious and a Church character, had long been deeply

impressed on Bishop Blomfield's mind. As far back as the first year of his London episcopate, he had made the importance of planting and fostering the Church in our colonies one of the grounds of objection against the Roman Catholic Emancipation Bill, and had called attention to the desirableness of retaining the Colonial Seals and the Presidency of the Board of Trade in Protestant hands, with a view to such an exercise of the colonial patronage of the Crown, both ecclesiastical and civil, as would have the effect, not of discouraging, but of countenancing, the Church in the colonies. "That Church," he had observed, "is at present in its infancy; and in order that it may thrive and grow up to maturity, the inhabitants of those colonies should feel the full conviction that the attention of His Majesty's Ministers is constantly directed to secure the welfare of the Church. They should be convinced that there is, on the part of His Majesty's Government, a readiness to receive suggestions and to attend to them; and it is from that conviction that great good or great evil will result to the Church, according as the persons who fill these two offices countenance or discourage persons of the Protestant interest."

The course which events had taken since these words of far-seeing counsel were spoken, was not of a nature to reassure the Bishop as to the protection of the interests of the Church in our distant possessions, or to render him less anxious to see those interests committed to the guardianship of a regular diocesan episcopate. "Every year's experience," this is the conclusion at which he had arrived, "tends to prove, and the opinion is rapidly gaining ground, that in our endeavours to provide for our colonists that which, in the first instance, they have not the means of providing for themselves, the ministrations and opportunities of our holy religion, it is not enough that we send out with them, or amongst them, a certain

number of missionaries; and that we contribute to build a certain number of churches and schools. No doubt even this provision will be productive of much good; but if we desire the good to be complete, permanent, and growing with the Church's growth, we must plant the Church amongst them in all its integrity. Each colony must have, not only its parochial or district pastors, but its chief pastor, to watch over, and guide, and direct the whole. An episcopal Church without Bishop is a contradiction in terms."

It was under the influence of these convictions that Bishop Blomfield gave the impulse to a movement, the fruits of which, though as yet but imperfectly developed, have already had the effect, not only of giving to the missionary work of the Church a character of consistency and efficiency to which she had long been aspiring in vain, but of placing the Anglican Branch of the Church Catholic throughout the world in a position which, while it forms the most striking and most cheering contrast with her former state of isolation and, beyond the shores of these islands, feebleness amounting almost to impotency, has enabled her to cope successfully, in our foreign dependencies, with the dangers arising from Popish influences upon the Imperial Government, which Bishop Blomfield's sagacious mind descried afar off, at the time when the aggressive policy of Rome first began to make its pressure seriously felt by the British Government and Legislature. On the 24th of April, in the year 1840, Bishop Blomfield addressed to Archbishop Howley a letter in which he urged upon that venerable Prelate, and through him upon the Church at large, as the result of his observation and experience, the convictions which had grown up in his own mind, in regard to that important part of the Apostolic Commission, the spread of the Gospel and the propagation of the Church.

"The time appears to me to have arrived," he said, "at which a great effort is required, on the part of the Church of England, to impart the full benefits of her apostolical government and discipline, as well as of her doctrines and ordinances, to those distant provinces of the British Empire, where, if the Christian religion is professed at all, it is left to depend for its continuance, under the blessing of its Divine Head, upon the energies of individual piety and zeal, without being enshrined in the sanctuary of a rightly constituted Church, the only sure and trustworthy instrument of its perpetuation and efficiency. The duty, incumbent upon the Government of a Christian country, of making provision for the spiritual wants of its colonies, a duty recognized and fulfilled by those States which have maintained their communion with the Church of Rome, was felt at far too late a period by the rulers of this Protestant country, and has at no time been completely and effectually carried out. At present it is openly called in question by a large proportion of the members of one branch of our Legislature; and there does not appear to be much hope of our obtaining, at the present moment, in the actual state of the public revenue, any considerable aid from the national resources, for the purpose of planting and maintaining the Church of this country in its colonies. In the meantime, those colonies are rapidly increasing in extent and population, and the want of some effectual provision for the preservation of their Christianity is augmented, just in proportion as the chance of supplying it appears to be diminished."

How vain would be the expectation that the duty so long neglected would at this time be taken in hand by the State, Bishop Blomfield had had ample opportunities of judging. Though he expressed himself on this point with all possible tenderness and moderation, it is clear that he had completely abandoned the hope of deriving assistance from the State for this great national object.

"Undoubtedly," he observed, "I hold that it is a sacred duty, incumbent upon the Government of a Christian State, to make due provision for the maintenance and extension of Christianity in every part of the dominions of that State: but the time is not yet come for the full and free acknowledgment of that duty on the part of those to whom it belongs; and we can hardly calculate upon an immediate exertion on the part of the Government of this country, adequately to supply the want of which I am now speaking. If they can be prevailed upon to take in hand the more urgent duty of supplying the spiritual wants of our manufacturing towns and populous districts at home, it is as much as we can expect for some considerable time to come."

With regard to the colonies themselves, the Bishop was somewhat more hopeful; though he did not blind himself to the difficulties which, even at their hands, the measure proposed by him was likely to encounter. "In some instances there will be found a want of adequate resources for the immediate endowment of bishoprics; in others, it is to be feared, a want of inclination, arising from a state of feeling on the subject of the Church, occasioned in great measure by the very deficiency which we desire to supply. All our colonies, however, are not insensible to the advantages of episcopal Church government; for it is known that there exists amongst the people of New Brunswick a very strong desire to have a Bishop of their own, residing amongst them, and giving full effect to the ministry of their clergy. For my own part, I believe that if measures were taken to provide a fund for the endowment of colonial bishoprics, some at least of our colonies would evince the same feeling of their own spiritual wants, and would be ready to assist us in the accomplishment of an object of too great magnitude perhaps, or thought to be so, for their own unaided resources."

Expecting nothing from the Government of the country,

and but little from those whose spiritual interests he was anxious to promote, the Bishop felt that he had no alternative but to fall back, as he had done in the local work of the Metropolitan Churches Fund, upon a sense of duty in the hearts of the members of the Church. "Where a work is to be done for any part of a Christian community, confessedly most important to their best interests, as well as to the cause of our Divine Master, if it is not done by the Government of the country to which that community belongs, (which, however, I can never regard as otherwise than bound to act as a part of the Church Catholic, in respect of its worldly means and appliances), it appears to me, that all the members of that community and Church are bound to take the work in hand, and to do that which may in no case be left undone. It is on this principle that the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts has now acted for more than a century. It has done that inadequately, which the Government of the country ought to have done completely; and as there seems now to be but little prospect of its being relieved of its responsibility, it is to be hoped that every member of our Church, whom Providence has blessed with the means, will at length be brought to feel that some portion of that responsibility rests upon himself."

In thus earnestly pressing upon the consideration of the Church the performance of this sacred duty, Bishop Blomfield contemplated not merely the reparation of past omissions, but the adoption of an entirely new system, in the conduct of her missionary operations. "The difference," as he himself explained the proposed change of proceeding, "between our past labours in the work of erecting colonial churches, and those which are now called for, must be this: that whereas we formerly began by sending out a few individual missionaries, to occupy detached and independent fields of labour,—unconnected with one another by their relation to a common oversight

in the execution of their task, although deriving their spiritual authority from a common origin,—and then, after an interval of many years, placing them under the guidance and control of Bishops; we should now, after having supplied the wants of those older colonies which are still destitute of the benefit of episcopal government, take care to let every new colony enjoy that blessing from the very first. Let every band of settlers which goes forth from Christian England, with authority to occupy a distinct territory, and to form a separate community, take with it not only its civil rulers and functionaries, but its Bishop and clergy."

But the views of Bishop Blomfield were not confined to the benefit to be conferred on the present and future colonies of the British empire, and generally on the missionary settlements of the English Church in foreign parts, by obtaining for them the advantage of a regularly constituted episcopate; they took a much wider range, as is apparent from the concluding portion of his letter to the Archbishop, in which he thus gave expression to his idea of the position which it became the Church of England to occupy among the Churches of the earth: "My own deeply-rooted conviction is, that if the Church of England bestir herself in good earnest, and put forth all the resources and energies which she possesses, and for the use of which she must give account, she will in due time cause the reformed episcopal Church to be recognized, by all the nations of the earth, as the stronghold of pure religion, and the legitimate dispenser of its means of grace; and will be a chosen instrument in the hands of God, for purifying and restoring the other branches of Christ's holy Catholic Church, and of connecting them with herself, as members of the same mystical body, in the way of truth, in the unity of the Spirit, and in the bond of peace."

The promulgation of the views set forth in this docu-

ment—considering the writings and words which have flowed, and doubtless will continue to flow, from it, one of the most important documents connected not only with Bishop Blomfield's episcopate, but with the history of the English Church—and the nearest effect. The two great Church Societies took the lead in responding to the call. At a meeting of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, specially convened in the month of June, the plan suggested by the Bishop, viz., that a fund should be formed by voluntary contributions for the endowment of bishoprics in the colonies, and other legacies of the British Crown, to be administered by the Archbishops and Bishops of the English Church—obtained the most practical expression of approval in the shape of a grant of 10,000*l.*; to which the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel subsequently added two grants, one of 5,000*l.*, the other of 2,500*l.* Before, however, the necessary arrangements for the establishment and administration of such a fund could be completed, the season was too far advanced for any effective steps to be taken to enlist public co-operation: but early in the following year the Archbishop of Canterbury convened a public meeting at Willis's Rooms, at which resolutions were passed, affirming the obligation of the Church of England, in the performance of “her magnanimous duty of providing for the religious wants of her members in foreign lands,” to “proceed upon her own principles of apostolical order and discipline;” and making arrangements for the fulfilment of that obligation in accordance with the plan proposed by the Bishop of London.

How near to Bishop Blomfield's heart the movement lay in which he had thus taken the initiative; how deep were the convictions, and how far-reaching the scope, which he entered upon it, appears from the opinion in which he supported the first of these resolutions. “It is impossible,” he said, “that I should not be interested

for the opportunity afforded me of taking a part in a meeting which has for its object the carrying out of a principle which lies very near to the foundation of the Christian Church ;—a meeting which is therefore calculated to render great assistance to the efficiency and usefulness of that Church. However much cause of complaint may exist at this time of the want of the full prosperity of the Church, it is not for us on this occasion to set forth in very glowing colours the neglect, —which on all hands must be deplored, —which has existed with reference to the provision for religious worship in the Colonies. It is rather for us to hope that it is not yet too late for us successfully to apply a remedy. Let us then, look forward with hope to the brightness of the future, rather than to the dark and dreary vision of the past.” After observing that the question might be raised, on whom, whether on the Church or on the State, the duty devolved of repairing the neglect of a century and a half,—the neglect to which the loss of the American Colonies was to be attributed, and which had caused tens of thousands of public money to be expended, —the Bishop went on to say, “At all events, the duty is so paramount, that at whatever expense, and by whomsoever that expense is to be borne, the duty must be performed. And if it should turn out that the State, whose natural duty it might be expected to be, to see that the religious wants of its subjects are provided for, declines to make the necessary provision, it is clear that the means must be found by the Church herself, under the conviction that it is an act which cannot with any feelings of propriety, moral or religious, be left undone. I have always thought that it is the duty of every Christian State to provide that every Christian subject should have the full means and opportunity of performing those Christian duties which his spiritual welfare demands.”

The responsibility cast upon the Church, in conse-

quence of the neglect of its duty on the part of the State, the Bishop thus urged :—" The Reformed Church of this country is the Church of an empire which has established for itself settlements in almost the uttermost parts of the globe ; whose language has become familiar to almost the remotest inhabitants of the earth ; and her religion, and her members, have been wafted to all its quarters. That being the case, it is not possible to conceive that she is not a missionary Church, appointed by the Divine Being to spread throughout the earth the principles of the true religion." And in speaking of the mode in which the Church was called upon to carry out her missionary character, the Bishop dwelt with great emphasis on the duty of adherence to her Apostolic constitution. " The Church, in the performance of her duty, is bound to act according to her apostolical principles. They are her own principles ; for the Church is based ' on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.' If the Church does not act on those principles, she is not faithful to her trust, nor will she fully answer the end of her institution. I believe I am addressing those who have imbibed this truth with their mothers' milk, who have proclaimed it in their own persons, and who are living under its influence, and enjoying its benefits. The title of Bishop, or Overseer, implies active superintendence over the ministers who are placed under him ; and the moment that this superintendence ceases, that moment the Church ceases to be an episcopal Church. An episcopal Church without a bishop, is neither more nor less than a body without a head ; the Church cannot be said to be an episcopal Church, when its head has ceased to exist. *Ecclesia est in Episcopo.*"

The immediate result of the meeting at which Bishop Blomfield gave expression to these sentiments, was of a highly satisfactory character. A sum of upwards of twelve thousand pounds, exclusively of the grants voted by the

two Societies, was subscribed in the room; the Queen Dowager giving a sum of 2000*l.*; and the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the Bishop of London, 1000*l.* each. Contributions of the most munificent character have since been made to the fund, among which are two donations, of 17,500*l.* each, from one individual, Miss Burdett Coutts, for the endowment of the two Sees of Cape Town and Adelaide. The aggregate result of the movement, up to the present time, is the erection of not less than twenty additional bishoprics, viz., three in the North American Colonies: four in the islands of the Indian Ocean and the Chinese Seas: two in the West Indian Islands; six in Australasia: three in South Africa; one on the West African Coast: and one which takes its name from the city of Gibraltar, but extends its superintending care over the whole of the English settlements in the Mediterranean. In addition to these Sees, already erected, the creation of six other Sees is at this moment under consideration, or in progress, viz., two in Canada, by the subdivision of the diocese of Toronto; three in India, two to be taken out of the diocese of Calcutta, and one out of the diocese of Madras; and one in Australia, by the subdivision of the diocese of Adelaide.





CHAPTER XVIII.

The Bishopric of Gibraltar—The Eastern Churches—Anglican Bishopric at Jerusalem—Episcopacy and the German Protestants—Negotiation with Archbishop Tenison—Spread of Rationalism in Germany—Lay Primacy of the King of Prussia—German Mission at Jerusalem—Overtures made to the English Church—Difficulties of the Scheme—Peculiar Position of the Holy City—Compact between the King of Prussia and the Heads of the English Church—Official Statement—Commendatory Letter to the Eastern Bishops—Unlooked for Results—The Romanizers—National and Clerical Jealousies—Qualifications for the Anglican Bishopric at Jerusalem—Bishop Alexander—Bishop Gobat—Scottish and American Episcopal Churches—Removal of Barriers—English Schismatics in the Scottish Dioceses—Repudiated by the English Episcopate—Bishop Blomfield's Letter to the Bishop of Glasgow—Catholic Intercommunion.

IN the creation of the See of Gibraltar, the Council appointed to promote the erection and endowment of additional bishoprics had in view, not merely the immediate object of securing episcopal oversight and ministrations to the numerous congregations of English residents distributed along the shores of the Mediterranean, but the further and more interesting object of opening the way for communication with the Bishops of the ancient Churches of the East, to whom the English Church had for centuries been known only by name. Towards the accomplishment of this object, another, and, as it appeared at the time, still more important step was

taken in the course of the same year in which the Colonial Bishoprics Fund was created, by the erection of an Anglican Bishopric at Jerusalem. This measure did not originate with the Colonial Bishoprics Fund, nor with the English episcopate, but with a foreign Sovereign, the King of Prussia, who, in June 1841, sent to England a special Envoy, the Chevalier Bunsen, as the bearer of proposals on the subject to the British Government, and to the Heads of the English Church.

The ostensible object which the king of Prussia had in view in making these proposals, was to secure to Evangelic truth an efficient representation at Jerusalem, where, besides Mahommedanism and Judaism, all the great sections of the Christian Church were represented by Bishops of the different communions. If the Protestant missions at Jerusalem were to take rank by the side of these, the king felt that this could only be achieved through a Bishop of the Apostolic succession; and he was desirous, therefore, if it were practicable, of having the German mission at Jerusalem, whose labours lay principally among the Jews, placed under the wing of an English episcopate. This, though sufficient in itself, was not, however, the only motive which prompted this approach to the English Church. A feeling had long existed among the Protestant communions of Germany, in the minds of those at least who looked upon the Church as a Divine institution, built on historical foundations, that the abrogation of the episcopal office at the Reformation was both a mistake, and a misfortune;—a mistake, inasmuch as it was in a great measure brought about by the violent language of the Reformers, and especially of Martin Luther; a misfortune, because those who were anxious for the preservation of the episcopate, were prevented by the confusion and violence of those calamitous times from giving effect to their intentions. The wish to repair this defect in the constitution of the Protestant Church in Germany had never quite died out;

and as far back as the commencement of the eighteenth century, an attempt had been made to obtain the restoration of the succession, and with it the introduction of the English Liturgy, in the Churches of Prussia and Hanover. That attempt had failed, mainly through the indifference with which the application was treated by Archbishop Tenison, and it had not since been renewed. Meanwhile the alarming progress of rationalism which characterized, in Germany, the close of the last and the beginning of the present century, and which had latterly proceeded to the utmost lengths of blasphemous extravagance, had produced a reaction in devout and thoughtful minds. Various efforts had been made to stem the tide of religious anarchy which had overflowed Germany, and which threatened to sweep away the last vestiges of Christianity itself. The centenary of the Reformation had been made use of, especially in Prussia, for the purpose of reconsolidating and reharmonizing the discordant elements into which German Protestantism had resolved itself. The promulgation of a new Liturgy, constructed on the principle of adapting its language to the widely divergent views of Luther and Zwingli on the Holy Eucharist, and at the same time approaching, as nearly as this compromise and the temper of the times would permit, to ancient models, had been followed by the constitution of a United Evangelical Church, with a nominal episcopate, deriving its authority, not from the Apostolic Commission, but from a Royal ordinance, and having at its head the king himself, as a species of lay *Primate*.

The last-named dignity had descended from Frederic William III to his Royal son, who did not find this *quasi* mitre sit particularly easy on his brow, already sufficiently burdened, in these revolutionary times, by the weight of the crown; and who, having formed of the constitution and spirit of the English Church a highly favourable opinion, had been led to look in that direction for a

remedy for the disjointed condition of the ecclesiastical establishment of which he was the head. Under these circumstances it was that the hope of being able, through the connection of the German mission at Jerusalem with an English episcopate, to engraft by degrees the Apostolic succession upon the Church of Prussia, presented itself to the King's mind, and rendered him, irrespectively of the position of that mission and its success in the conversion of the Jews, anxious for the measure which he instructed his Envoy to negotiate in England. On the part of the Government, Chevalier Bunsen experienced no difficulty; and Archbishop Howley and Bishop Blomfield, to whom he submitted the proposals,—to the former as Primate, to the latter as having the *quasi* jurisdiction already mentioned over the outposts of the English Church,—gave the plan their most willing, though anxious, consideration. The difficulties which presented themselves were of two kinds. One had reference to the rule and practice of the Church Catholic, which forbids the establishment of more than one episcopate within the same territorial limits. From this rule, however, the Holy City, it was thought, might, in the existing condition of Christendom, justly form an exception. The Patriarch of Jerusalem, without abdicating his own prior and superior rights, had already accorded a sort of recognition in the Holy City to the Bishops of Christian communions not under his patriarchal sway. The precedent was established and long acquiesced in; and it could scarcely be contended that the Anglican Branch of the Church Catholic was not as well entitled to be represented by a Bishop of her own in the original metropolis of Christendom, as the Christians of the Roman or the Armenian communion; nor, provided the jurisdiction of the Anglican bishop were limited to members of his own communion, and of other Protestant communions of the West who were willing to place themselves under his episcopal superin-

tendence, could it be regarded as an invasion of the ecclesiastical authority of the Patriarch. The other difficulty which presented itself was that which arose from the difference in the constitution of the English Church and of the Protestant Church in Prussia. This, it was thought, was sufficiently obviated by the permission accorded to the German congregations at Jerusalem, to use, in their own language, their own national liturgies, on the one hand; and on the other hand, by the requirement, on the part of the English Church, of subscription to her Articles, in the case of German candidates for the ministry presented to the Bishop for ordination, as well as of English ordination as a *sine quâ non* of the recognition of the ministers of the German mission at Jerusalem by the Bishop. On this basis, accordingly, the compact was entered into between the King of Prussia, representing the German Protestant Church, and the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, as representatives of the English Church, by which the former bound himself to endow the See to be erected with an income of 600*l.* per annum, to be met by an equivalent endowment from voluntary contributions collected in the English Church; while the Heads of that Church undertook, with the sanction of the Queen's Government, and under the provisions of an Act of Parliament passed for the purpose, to consecrate a Bishop for the See so created, with an understanding that the right of nomination should be alternately in the Crowns of England and of Prussia; a veto upon the Royal selection being, in the latter case, vested in the Archbishop of Canterbury.

In order to remove all ground of misconception, statements were issued, both in this country and in Germany, setting forth the terms on which, and the purposes for which, the See had been erected. Touching the relations between the Anglican Bishop and the Eastern Churches, the statement promulgated in England contained the fol-

lowing passage:—"He will establish and maintain, as far as in him lies, relations of Christian charity with other Churches represented at Jerusalem, and in particular with the orthodox Greek Church; taking special care to convince them that the Church of England does not wish to disturb, or divide, or interfere with them; but that she is ready, in the spirit of Christian love, to render them such offices of friendship as they may be willing to receive." In strict accordance with these sentiments, the first Bishop sent on this mission was furnished with a letter of commendation from the Metropolitan and Primate of the English Church to the Churches of the East, in which they were assured that the bearer of it was enjoined "on no account, nor in any way, to invade the jurisdiction of the Bishops and other Dignitaries of the Hierarchy of the Eastern Churches; but rather to show them due honour and reverence; and to be ready, at all times and in every way, to promote the things which make for brotherly love, mutual kindness, and concord." The letter concluded with the expression of a hope that it would be received as an evidence of the earnest desire of the English Church "to renew towards the ancient Churches of the East the usages of that primitive love, which has for so many ages been interrupted; which," the letter continued, "being renewed with God's blessing and grace, may, we trust, have the effect of healing the schisms by which the Church of Christ has suffered the most grievous calamities."*

However unsupported by ecclesiastical precedent the

* The Greek "translation" of this letter is couched in far more appropriate and ecclesiastical language than its English "original;" and as in this case the "translation," that is, the document sent out, is virtually the "original," a literal translation from the Greek has been preferred in this place to a transcript of the "original" English document.

measure thus agreed to and carried into effect by Archbishop Howley and Bishop Blomfield might be, it cannot be denied that the circumstances which it was intended to meet, were equally without precedent in the history of Christendom ; that it was taken in hand in a truly Catholic spirit ; and that every care was taken to guard against the abuses and inconveniences to which, without such precautions, it might be liable. And if the result had been answerable to the expectations of the two Prelates, — expectations neither unreasonable nor exaggerated ; if the primitive character of the Church had been restored in Protestant Germany, and that large section of Western Christendom had thus been drawn into bonds of spiritual intercommunion with the Churches of the English communion, not in this country alone, but all over the world ; if, on the other hand, a mutual recognition and interchange of spiritual help and service had been brought about between the Churches of the East and the Reformed Churches of the West : who shall tell what might have been the effect produced on universal Christendom, or who could have done otherwise than hail with joy such a consummation ?

That no such result was attained,—that, on the contrary, a step which was intended to promote Catholic union and concord, gave rise to fresh occasions of offence and alienation,—cannot assuredly, with any justice, be charged upon the measure itself to which Archbishop Howley and Bishop Blomfield gave their consent and co-operation ; and which was framed by them with more than ordinary care, in a manner calculated to avoid such consequences, and to ensure success. Various were the causes which combined to bring about results diametrically opposed to those aimed at by its originators and its promoters. In England, where Romanising tendencies were then beginning to manifest themselves, the creation of the new bishopric was industriously discredited

by those who, so far from wishing to see the rest of Christendom united in opposition to Rome, desired to make the Popedom the centre of Catholic unity, and who at that time, not having as yet thrown off the mask, had obtained a leading position in the Church. In Germany, and among the Protestant communions of the Continent generally, the suspicion that the introduction of the Apostolic succession from England, and approximation to the English Church, was the main object secretly aimed at by the King of Prussia, aroused national and clerical susceptibilities, which were not only not allayed, but greatly irritated, by the phrase,—the tenderest that he could well have chosen,—“less perfectly constituted Churches,” employed by the Archbishop to designate the non-episcopal Protestant communions of the Continent. In the East, the measure failed through the insufficient qualifications, in the first instance, and afterwards the positive disqualifications, of the individual selected as the instrument for bringing about so mighty a result as a restoration of primitive intercommunion between the Churches of the East and the West.

For such a work a man ought to have been selected, who, with an ardent love of the Jewish people,—ostensibly the primary object of his mission,—with a thorough knowledge of their feelings, their prejudices, their views, and, above all, their religious traditions, should have combined a no less thorough knowledge of ecclesiastical antiquity, and especially a familiar acquaintance with the ancient luminaries of the Eastern Church, as well as with her subsequent history,—a man who, deeply imbued with the principles of Apostolic order and Evangelical truth, of which the English Church is the Divinely appointed witness at the present stage of the Church's history, should have been filled with, animated by, a truly Catholic spirit,—a man possessing a capacious, well-stored mind, and a large heart, overflowing with the love of Christ. It is no

disrespect to the memory of Bishop Alexander to say that he was very far indeed from coming up to these requirements. It was his misfortune, rather than his fault, that he was placed in a position to which he was every way unequal. The appointment to such a mission as that with which he was charged, of a well-meaning and pious Jew missionary of no great grasp of mind or energy of character, but moderately informed as to the principles of the Church which he was sent to represent, and all but wholly ignorant on the subject of the Churches among which he was to appear as her representative, was doubtless a great mistake, by whomsoever committed. But when, on the death of Bishop Alexander, the important office which he had so inadequately discharged, was entrusted to the hands of a young deacon, raised *per saltum* to the episcopate of a Church with whose principles he had little acquaintance and less sympathy, a man without experience and without solid information, who brought to his work little more than a raw and ignorant zeal for the propagation of narrow and uncatholic tenets, it cannot be matter of surprise that he was not proof against the dangers which, the highest authority teaches us, beset the "novice" suddenly raised to an important position; and that in his hands the Jerusalem Bishopric has become an offence to the East, and a byeword in the West.

Better success attended another measure, in which likewise Bishop Blomfield bore an active part,—taken up in the same year in which, by his letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, he gave the impulse to the increase of the colonial episcopate, and with the same high purpose, enunciated by him in that letter, that of obtaining in due time "the recognition of the Reformed Episcopal Church by all the nations of the earth, as the stronghold of pure religion, and the legitimate dispenser of its means of grace."

It had long been a cause of regret to the more Catholic

was introduced by the Archbishop of Canterbury; which embraced the cases of both the Scottish and American Episcopal Churches, and which empowered the English Bishops, under certain restrictive regulations, to grant a license to clergymen of Scottish or American ordination to officiate in their dioceses. The relaxation of the former prohibition did not, indeed, extend beyond two Sundays, without an express renewal of the license; and the state of the law, therefore, remained,—though it will not, it is to be hoped, much longer continue,—open to the reproach of making an invidious distinction between the established and the non-established clergy: but even the narrow privilege so accorded possessed considerable value, since it established the principle of intercommunion between Churches accordant in doctrine and discipline, and differing only in regard to their political position. That principle being once recognized, the door was opened for acts of intercommunion, in which Bishop Blomfield made it a point personally to take a prominent part, both by admitting the ministrations of Scottish Bishops and Presbyters in his diocese, and by himself officiating in their Churches in Scotland.

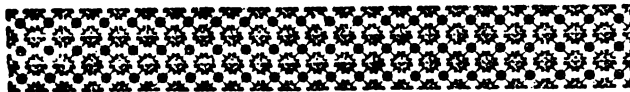
The importance of the principle so established became still more apparent, when, a few years after the Act had passed, some English clergymen, having taken charge of congregations in Scotland, repudiated the authority of the Bishops in whose dioceses they were located, on the plea that, being in communion with the English Church and her Bishops, there was no necessity for them to place themselves under the control and superintendence of the Scottish Prelates. In the course of the discussion which ensued, the English Bishops were appealed to, and responded to the call of their Scottish brethren by repudiating the pretended communion with the refractory clergy, and in decisive terms expressing their disapprobation of their conduct. Among the documents which

passed on this occasion, is a letter addressed by Bishop Blomfield to the Bishop of Glasgow, in which he says: "My opinion, as to the obligation which binds an English clergyman, desirous of officiating in Scotland, to seek for authority to do so at the hands of the Bishop within whose diocese he is to officiate, and to pay him canonical obedience, has long been made known in that country. I retain that opinion unchanged. As to the jurisdiction which, it appears, some persons suppose me to possess as Bishop of London over English clergymen residing in Scotland, I absolutely disclaim it. Were I to pretend to any such jurisdiction, I should be intruding into a province which does not belong to me; and any attempt to exercise it would be productive of schism and confusion." After observing that he had "very strongly urged the duty of paying spiritual allegiance" to his diocesan Bishop upon one of the schismatical clergy, on his departure for Scotland, Bishop Blomfield adds: "The refusal of it must lead to disorder, and to a weakening of the Church, at a time when all her energies are needed to resist the assaults of those who are equally hostile to the Scotch and English Branches of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, as possessing the apostolical inheritance of episcopacy."

At a still later period, the jubilee of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel afforded a fresh opportunity for the practical exhibition of the existing intercommunion between the whole of the Reformed Episcopal Churches, including the American Church. The idea of a General Council of Bishops of the English Reformed Church has even been suggested; and if ever an adequate emergency, requiring the convocation of such a Council, should arise, the imposing spectacle would be presented to the world of upwards of 120 bishops, gathered together from every quarter of the globe, bearing their united witness to the primitive order and discipline of the Church,

and to "the faith once delivered to the Saints." Contrasting this state of things with the position of ecclesiastical isolation, and political dependence, in which the English Episcopate stood at the time when Bishop Blomfield was raised to its ranks, and considering how large a share he has borne in bringing about this remarkable and happy change, it is impossible not to feel that the Church owes him a debt of deep gratitude for the eminent services which he has rendered to her, as in other respects, so more particularly in the restoration of intercommunion between all the Reformed Branches of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.





CHAPTER XIX.

Internal Conflicts in the Church—Projected Association for her Defence—The Oxford Movement—Declarations of Attachment—"Tracts for the Times"—Preservative against Methodism and Popery—Unguarded Statements and Exaggerated Views—Remonstrances and Suspicions—The Evangelical School—Merits of its Founders—Its Degeneracy—Revival of Puritanism—Controversies and Dissensions—Bishop Blomfield's Charitable Hope—Attacks upon the Articles and Liturgy—Archbishop Whately and Bishop Stanley—The Catholic Church founded on Truth—Religious Democracy and the Principle of "Expansion"—Subscription to the Articles—Tract XC.—Theological Tempest—Bishop Blomfield's "Sermons on the Church"—Episcopal Church Government—Its Reasonableness—Its Divine Institution—Its Transmission, unchallenged for Fifteen Centuries—Doctrine of the Apostolical Succession.

HITHERTO we have seen Bishop Blomfield doing battle for the Church, with varied success, against the hostile attacks of Romanism and dissent, and of the latitudinarian spirit of the age; we have seen him lifting up his voice, in bold remonstrance, against the ungodliness of the rich and great, and labouring earnestly for the improvement of the lower classes of society; we have seen him exerting his influence to extend the ministrations of the Church to the spiritually destitute, both at home and abroad, and his authority for the purpose of giving to those ministrations a higher tone and character. If the blows aimed at the Church by an adverse party in the

State had not all been warded off, he had yet had the satisfaction of witnessing, and himself largely contributing to, the defeat of the more alarming schemes of spoliation and secularization set on foot by her enemies. If his appeals to the liberality of the members of the Church had not called forth as ample a response as their urgency and the Church's need required, he had nevertheless been enabled to achieve a great work of Church extension in his own diocese, and to promote the more effective organization of the Church in her missionary operations. If the performance of the duties of the ministry fell as yet in many instances, and in divers particulars, short of the high standard which he had proposed, first to himself, and afterwards to the clergy of whom he had the oversight, still a great improvement had been effected, as regards both the qualifications of those who sought admission to holy orders, and the manner in which they discharged the various functions of their sacred office, not in his own diocese alone, but throughout the Church. In looking back upon his laborious career, and comparing his achievements with his intentions,—the results produced with the efforts made,—he might, indeed, see much that he would have wished far otherwise; still, his endeavours had, on the whole, been crowned, under the Divine blessing, with no inconsiderable measure of success.

But an occasion of trial and of conflict now arose, which taxed his powers far more severely than any of the struggles through which he had passed, or any of the labours, even the most arduous, in which he had been engaged. Elements of discord, pregnant with peril to her best interests, arose within the Church herself, and made demands of no ordinary kind upon the wisdom and temper, the courage and firmness of her rulers. The source from which this new danger sprang, lay concealed among the very foundations of the Church; the danger itself was altogether novel, and for a long time scarcely suspected.

At the very commencement of the struggle, the progress of which has been traced in these pages,—when the victory achieved by the democracy in imposing the Reform Bill on the Crown and the Parliament led the enemies of the Church to hope for her speedy downfall, and filled her faithful friends and dutiful sons with the gloomiest apprehensions,—the formation of a wide-spread association for her defence had been projected by a number of men resident in, or connected with, the University of Oxford. They were, for the most part, men of distinguished abilities, in the full vigour of ripening manhood, linked together by personal and collegiate ties, and united by strong religious sympathies. To oppose the tide of irreligion which was then threatening to inundate the Church, by the assertion and wider diffusion of Church principles, was the general object for which they were to be banded together. The projected association, however, never was formed; the co-operation for its proposed object was confined to a comparatively small number; and neither that object itself, nor the plans to be adopted in pursuing it, were ever properly defined. At an early stage of the movement conferences were held, and an extensive correspondence was carried on with well-affected members of the Church in different parts of the country, for the purpose of obtaining signatures to declarations expressive of attachment to the faith and worship of the Church of England, and to her apostolic form of government, as well as of a determination to maintain her in her character and position as the National Church. These declarations, lay as well as clerical, with numerous signatures attached to them, were presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury in the early part of the year 1834, and tended greatly to strengthen the hands of the Episcopate, and of the friends of the Church in high places: they even met with a response from the throne itself in the speech in which, on the occasion of his birthday, King William IV. assured

the Bishops, not in the phraseology of official etiquette, but in the heartfelt language of personal conviction, of "his firm attachment to the Church, and his resolution to maintain her."

Simultaneously with this movement several of the men with whom it originated, began to issue tracts, with the view of supporting and disseminating Church principles. In this branch of their proceedings the absence of a well concerted plan of operations soon made itself felt. There was no joint responsibility, and no mutual control; an attempt to establish both, fell to the ground; and while a vague impression prevailed in the public mind that the tracts proceeded from an organised Association,—an impression which the adoption of a common title, "Tracts for the Times," naturally tended to confirm,—the fact was that the different contributors put forth what sentiments they thought fit, each upon his individual responsibility. There was, indeed some sort of agreement as to the general principles to be advocated in the "Tracts." The apostolical foundations of the Church were to be insisted on as the true safeguards against error of every description. "Methodism and Popery,"—says the preface to the first volume of the "Tracts," dated "The Feast of All Saints, 1834,"—"are, in different ways, the refuge of those whom the Church stints of the gifts of grace; they are the foster-mothers of abandoned children. The neglect of the daily service, the desecration of festivals, the Eucharist scantily administered, insubordination permitted in all ranks of the Church, orders and offices imperfectly developed, the want of societies for particular religious objects, and the like deficiencies, lead the feverish mind, desirous of a vent to its feelings, and a stricter rule of life, to the smaller religious communities, to prayer and Bible meetings, and ill-advised institutions and societies, on the one hand—on the other, to the solemn and captivating services by which Popery gains its promelytes." It was to guard

against these dangers that the publication of the "Tracts" had been undertaken. "There are," the same preface goes on to say, "zealous sons and servants of the English branch of the Church of Christ, who see with sorrow that she is defrauded of her full usefulness by particular theories and principles of the present age, which interfere with the execution of one portion of her commission; and while they consider that the revival of this portion of truth is especially adapted to break up existing parties in the Church, and to form instead a bond of union among all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, they believe that nothing but these neglected doctrines, faithfully preached, will repress that extension of Popery for which the ever multiplying divisions of the religious world are too clearly preparing the way."

Of the sincerity with which these sentiments were put forth at the time, it would be unreasonable and unjust to entertain any doubt. And had the character of the "Tracts" been throughout consistent with this their professed object, the result aimed at, the restoration of unity, and with it of spiritual efficiency, in the Church of England, might have been happily attained. Unfortunately, however, in the absence of supervision, unguarded statements and exaggerated views soon began to creep in. Even while the declarations of attachment to the Church were being circulated for signature, difficulties arose out of the dissatisfaction and distrust which particular passages and occasional expressions in the "Tracts" had excited. The warnings and remonstrances of the more experienced and sober-minded among the originators of the movement were unheeded by the younger, and less solidly informed, but more ardent minds. Several well-known and distinguished advocates of Church principles felt it due to themselves publicly to disclaim all responsibility for the "Tracts;" the effect of which was that the whole movement fell more and more into the hands of those who

were least fitted to guide it. So strong and so general were the suspicions engendered in consequence of all this, that when, in 1836, the appointment of Dr. Hampden to the Regius Professorship of Divinity called forth the opposition of the University, it was thought expedient, as a precautionary measure, to request one of its leading members, whose name had been freely made use of in connexion with the "Tracts," to abstain from taking a prominent part in the proceedings.

While the tendencies thus developed excited the apprehensions of the more deep-thinking and far-seeing among the advocates of Church-principles, they provoked a spirit of bitter opposition at the hands of that section of the Church which claimed, somewhat too exclusively, to be the representative of vital religion. The so-called "Evangelical" school, which took its rise from a deep and earnest zeal for the spread of the Gospel, and the salvation of men's souls, at a period of miserable stagnation and spiritual deadness, had shared the fate of all party movements in the Church. The master-minds, to whom the Church owed a deep debt of gratitude, had, one after another, been removed from the scene of action; and those who succeeded to that most envenoming inheritance, the leadership of a religious party, possessed neither the high gifts and mental endowments of their predecessors, nor their fervent love and more catholic spirit. Active and zealous in their several spheres, they advanced pretensions to pre-eminence, which, for want of more substantial means of supporting them, they enforced by the use of *Sabbaticism*. Accustomed to a commanding position in the Church, they looked with a jealous eye upon the progress of a movement, the success of which they foresaw would tend to impair their influence, and to reduce them to the ranks. Under the operation of these feelings, and in the absence of sound theological learning,—the want of which they sup-

plied by a conventional and more or less sectarian phraseology,—they were slow to appreciate what was really good and valuable, and quick to discern what was questionable, in the new religious movement of which the “Tracts for the Times” were the ostensible exponents. In their opposition to it they appealed to party prejudices rather than to principles, and too frequently substituted clamour and personal abuse for solid argument. The effect of this mode of warfare was to irritate, instead of correcting; and to goad spirits already too prone to run into extremes, to further exaggeration of their distinctive tenets. A regular process of action and reaction set in, by which both parties were, in the course of hot and acrimonious controversies, driven in opposite directions to a daily widening distance, not only from each other, but from the golden middle path of truth and charity. On the one hand Puritanism, which had well nigh died out, revived in all its pristine bitterness; while, on the other hand, Romanizing tendencies began to manifest themselves with increasing force and to an alarming extent; and the antagonism thus engendered was not diminished, when the former school began more and more overtly to fraternize with the spirit of the age; while the latter, under the influence of a strong repulsion, betook itself to the revival of mediæval notions and practices.

Years, however, elapsed before the full extent of the mischief became apparent; and even so sagacious an observer of passing events as Bishop Blomfield, failed to discern the magnitude of the danger which was threatening the peace of the Church. “I am persuaded,” he observed, in allusion to the first indications of the impending storm of controversy, in the Charge delivered at his Visitation in 1838, “that it is the sincere wish of the clergy at large, as I am sure it is their bounden duty, to give to the Established Church the greatest possible efficiency, as the chosen and honoured instrument of instructing the people at large in

the doctrines of our holy religion, of imparting to them its privileges and consolations, and of training them in the practice of its precepts. As to those methods of accomplishing these objects, which are of a purely religious kind, the celebration of Divine Worship, the administration of the Sacraments, the preaching of the Word—although there may be some diversities of opinion as to the comparative efficacy of these different means of grace, it is to be hoped that there will arise no very important practical difference between men who have all set their hands to the same confession of belief, and have all pledged themselves to the strict observance of the same ritual.”

Within three years from the expression of this charitable hope, an open attack was made upon the Church’s formularies of faith and worship by two prominent members of the Episcopate, on the one side; and on the other side, their value as safeguards of the Church’s doctrine was covertly assailed by a leading member of the party whose professed object was the maintenance and dissemination of Church principles. The former onslaught, though apparently the more menacing of the two, was quashed on the instant; and deserves to be remembered only as affording an illustration of the readiness, as well as earnestness, of Bishop Blomfield in standing forth as the champion of the Church and her principles. It was Dr. Whately, the Archbishop of Dublin, who, in May, 1840, presented to the House of Lords a petition, not very numerously signed, praying for such an alteration of the Articles and Liturgy as would make them “consistent with the practice of the clergy, and the acknowledged meaning of the Church.” The petition originated with a score or two of clergymen of lax opinions,—one of whom, a prebendary of Norwich, threatened, unless the required alterations, including the abrogation of the Athanasian Creed, were made, to deprive the Church of his services, and himself of his canonry, but thought better of it afterwards, and to

the lay retain his soul. It conveyed by implication against the great body of the English clergy the very same imputation which, on a previous occasion, had been indignantly repelled by Bishop Bloomfield, when insinuated by the Roman controversialist, Mr. Charles Butler,* and which proved afterwards a powerful weapon in the hands of the opposite party,—the imputation, namely, that their subscription to the Articles and Liturgy was tainted with insincerity. The Archbishop of Dublin was followed in his advocacy of the object of the petition by the Bishop of Norwich, who, among other reasons for “honestly and wisely meeting the difficulties” which might stand in the way of the alterations prayed for, committed himself to the startling proposition that “the Church was founded upon liberty of conscience, and the right of private judgment.” Such an assertion was not likely to pass unchallenged in the presence of Bishop Bloomfield, who commenced his remarks on the subject of the petition by “noticing” what he might well term “a remarkable sentiment to have fallen from a Christian clergyman.” “It is,” the Bishop said, “practically the fact that the Protestant Church permits as great a degree of liberty of conscience as is consistent with the interests of religion; but I have always understood that the Catholic Church is founded on truth; that the Church is the authorized interpreter of the Word of truth; and that she would desert her duty, if she did not lay down, for the good of the people, the great truths which are extracted from the Bible.” In reference to the object of the petition, the Bishop, while “strongly deprecating any alteration,” expressed his conviction that “there existed amongst the great body of laymen, as well as amongst the great mass of the clergy, a strong indisposition to meddle with the formularies of the Church.” But most remarkable, among the reasons which he advanced against the proposal—remarkable as bearing directly upon

* See p. 45.

* See p. 45.

the controversy which soon after broke out—were the following observations :—"Looking, too," he said, "to the unsettled state of men's minds upon several topics in some degree connected with the Church, I think it would be peculiarly undesirable at the present moment to moot the question of a change of the articles, or an alteration of the subscription." And, with his usual clearness of perception as to the practical consequences of the recognition of certain principles, he added :—"It is true in ecclesiastical, as in political history, that democracy will end in despotism,—religious democracy in spiritual despotism. What is the expansion that is required? It is this : that when a clergyman declares '*ex animo*,' he shall be understood as declaring only in what sense he pleases. This is 'expansion' with a vengeance ;—an expansion which does not partake of that prudent elasticity which, though always ready to accommodate itself to the peculiarities of our infirm and imperfect nature, will never stretch beyond the line of truth, nor sacrifice that which is just and true, to meet the maudlin scruples of any conscience whatever. If your Lordships are to set out," the Bishop went on to say, "upon the principle of satisfying all, you will soon have no peculiarity of doctrine, no articles, no liturgy, but will reduce the Church to a mere naked *caput mortuum*, neither satisfying the consciences of men here, nor offering a sound foundation on which to base their hopes of hereafter."

From this expression of Bishop Blomfield's sentiments as to the meaning and intent of subscription to the formularies of the Church, it is not difficult to infer in what light he would regard the principles propounded in the celebrated "Tract XC," which early in the following year, —its date is "The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul,"—raised, not at Oxford only, but all over the country, a theological tempest that severely tried, and, in too many instances, shook, the foundations of men's faith. Amidst

the din of this tempest Bishop Blomfield was not over anxious to cause his own voice to be heard. He was content, for a time, to stand by and watch in silence the progress of the controversy, in which many that were, and many more that were not, competent for the task, so eagerly engaged, and in which the keenest shafts which the theological armoury could supply, were fiercely brandished, and hurled from side to side. The only attempt which he made to gain a hearing, in the Church at large, for the accents of calm and sober truth, was the publication of three "Sermons on the Church," which he preached in the parish church of St. James, Westminster, in Lent, 1842, and in which he vindicated the Apostolical Government and authority of the Church Catholic generally, and of the English branch of it in particular, by a course of argument remarkable for its simplicity and lucidity, without even alluding in direct terms to the existing dissensions in the Church. Incidentally he pointed out the deficiency of evidence in support of the Papal claim to universal supremacy, as compared with the conclusive proofs by which Episcopacy is shown to be of Divine appointment; and, on the other hand, while enforcing the duty of submission to God's ordinance in His Church, he drew a broad line of demarcation between Churches deprived by necessity of episcopal government, and communities wilfully separated from it where it may be had; taking occasion, again incidentally, to rebuke the spirit of arrogance and uncharitableness in which some presumed to deal out their anathemas against the former. The general tenor and object of the sermons was, irrespectively of controversy, to furnish plain members of the English Church with satisfactory reasons for faithful adherence to her communion, and a devout use of her privileges and means of grace. For this purpose he placed the nature, the historical origin, and the divine authority of Episcopal Church government before his hearers in the

simplest form, divesting the argument of all the technicalities with which it is wont to be encumbered by theological disputants.

“God,” he said, “has given us the Word of life; and the Eternal Son of God has appointed Sacraments of grace; but the Word must be continually preached, and the Sacraments rightly administered, by persons specially appointed to the work; or else the one would soon be unread, and the others neglected and disused. To make some provision for a perpetual proclamation of God’s truth, and for its enforcement upon the consciences and affections of mankind, and to ensure the continued performance of those acts of acknowledgment without which the sovereignty of Jehovah would be disregarded, and the Redeemer’s mediatorial kingdom forgotten, would have been the dictate of a wise policy on the part of the Apostles, in the execution of the charge confided to them, even if it had not been the direct suggestion of the Holy Spirit. The institution of Church government, and a continued succession in the Christian ministry, were absolutely necessary to the continuance of the Church itself, and to the effectual discharge of its functions. ‘How,’ asks the Apostle, ‘shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?’

“This ascending connexion between the spiritual wants of God’s people, and the mission and duties of His ministers, arises from a state of things which can never cease to exist till the Church has done its perfect work, and all the kingdoms of the earth are become, in spirit as in name, ‘the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ. Ignorance is to be enlightened; pardon is to be proclaimed to repentant sinners, and to be sealed in baptism, and in the Sacrament of Christ’s body and blood; the terrors of the Lord

are to be maintained against the workers of iniquity: the discipline are to be maintained: the crosses adorned: the fearful encouragement. He was instructed and strengthened: and this is a work which cannot be done in a slight and perfunctory manner, at spare moments, stolen from the pressing engagements and occupations of the world, nor by men who have no sufficient credentials to produce of their delegation to perform it; but it must be done steadily, unobtrusively; as the chief business, the most important work of all, by men specially commissioned, separated from their brethren, divorced from the ordinary business of life, carefully prepared for the due execution of their task, and solemnly invested with authority for its performance. It was therefore to be expected, that this would be provided for by those holy and divinely enlightened men to whom Jesus Christ had delegated power to do all things necessary for the maintenance and extension of His household, and to whom He had promised the sure guidance of the Spirit, and His own unfailing presence. Had they possessed no such power, had they made no such provision, the consequences must have been disorder and confusion; the dissolution and ruin of the Church, as soon as the Apostles themselves should have been removed from its government. It would have availed but little, that they had launched the vessel, with its precious charge, into the stormy and troubled ocean of a hostile world, and just steered it out of port, if, when they were summoned to leave it, none had succeeded to the helm, with the authority of *guidance* at least, if not of *command*, and with power to transmit that authority to others.

"We may therefore inquire, with an assurance of not being disappointed in the inquiry, what was the course pursued by the Apostles, in order to secure the perpetuity, and purity, and efficiency of the Church of Christ? If we discover, as we readily may, in the inspired records of their acts, and in their own instructions to the Churches,

the distinct outlines of that spiritual polity which they constituted for those objects, we have a model and rule of Church government which cannot mislead us: and if we find, upon pursuing our researches through the history of successive ages of the Church, that same rule and model followed, in its essential features, by all Christian communities, however differing upon other points, we have strong reasons for concluding that it is the *right* rule and the *true* model; and that it was intended by the Apostles to be (what, in fact, it was for more than fifteen centuries,) the pattern and example by which all the branches of Christ's universal Church should frame their government and discipline. Now this is undeniably the case with Episcopacy. There is no one doctrine or tenet of the Christian religion in which all Christians were, for fifteen centuries, so unanimously agreed as this of Episcopacy."

Such a mode of setting before the people the origin and warrant of the Apostolic government of the Church, the Bishop might well hope would have the effect of superseding in reflecting minds the quibbles and cavils raised at this time against the doctrine of the Apostolic succession. He might hope, too, that it might serve to put those who were, no less than himself, but with differently attempered weapons, contending for the same doctrine, in remembrance of the solemn realities and the weighty responsibilities of the Apostolical commission, and thus recall their minds, from the "questions and strifes of words," and the ceremonial frivolities, on which they were so eagerly intent, to the more important object of "godly edifying;" nay, he might hope, that so unimpeachably clear, and at the same time so temperate an exposition of the grounds on which the authority of the Chief Pastors in the Church of Christ rests, would gain from both sides an attentive and a deferential hearing, when the time should arrive for the interposition of his authoritative judgment on the matters in dispute.



CHAPTER XX.

Bishop Blomfield's Visitation Charge of 1842—His Reluctance to pronounce Judgment—His Obedience to the Call of Duty—Principle of his Judgment—Deference to the Church's Voice and Will—Ministerial Authority—Its Nature and Limits—The Christian Priesthood—Its True Functions—Romanizing Interpretation of the Articles—An Old Device of Rome—Temptations to Apostasy—Scripture and Tradition—The "Disciplina Arcani"—Romish Books of Devotion—Disparagement of the English Church—Tenderness towards Romish Error—The name "Protestant"—Duty of Continued Separation from Rome—The Royal Supremacy—"The Church in Fetters"—Faithfulness to the Church—Ritual Observances—Obligation of Conformity to the Rubric—Recommendations and Suggestions—Objectionable Practices—The Advantage of General Uniformity.

THE time when Bishop Blomfield was imperatively called upon to pronounce upon the questions which had for some years divided the Church, came at last. In the autumn of 1842 the Bishop had to meet the Clergy of his diocese at his regular quadrennial Visitation: and it then became apparent, that although a silent, he had been by no means an unobservant spectator of the agitation by which the Church around him was convulsed. Yet, fully prepared as he was for the difficult task, it was not, even then, without reluctance that he proceeded to "give sentence." "I have," he said, in the opening of his Charge, "looked forward to meeting you, on the occasion of my fourth Visitation,

with mingled feelings of pleasure and anxiety ; of pleasure, as being permitted by the goodness of God to congratulate you upon the Church's increased and increasing energy, and usefulness, and power ; of anxiety, as being sensible that I should be expected to speak, with the authority belonging to my office, upon the most important of the questions respecting which the Clergy are at this time divided in opinion. These questions are, in fact, so much more urgent than any others which present themselves as suitable topics of an address upon this occasion, that I make no apology for entering upon them at once, without pausing to notice matters of inferior moment.

“ The questions to which I allude, relate partly to the doctrines of our Church, and partly to its ritual. It will not be possible for me, in the compass of a Charge, to do more than touch, in a summary manner, upon the principal features of the controversy now carrying on amongst us ; and I must therefore abstain, as far as the nature of the subject will permit, from lengthened argument and discussion : but you have a right to know my opinions on these matters ; and I shall proceed to state them as plainly and as briefly as I can. This is the first opportunity which I have had of doing so, in an official address to the Clergy, since the controversy assumed a definite and prominent shape ; and I acknowledge that I was not unwilling to pause, and to be silent for a time, in the hope that those who have been engaged in that controversy, would see the evils which must ensue to the Church from its continuance, and be led to modify, or at least to keep within their own bosoms, what I considered to be extreme opinions. That hope has unhappily passed away ; and it now remains for me to perform the duty of pronouncing that deliberate judgment, which the Clergy of my own diocese are entitled to look for. In so doing, it will be my endeavour, in humble reliance upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit, not to enter into a

polemical discussion on the truth of the doctrines, or the propriety of the rites and ceremonies, which will come under consideration ; but to act as an interpreter of the Church's sense as to the one, and of her will as to the other. If these can be clearly ascertained, we can have no difficulty, looking to the relation in which we stand to her, as to *what* we are to teach, or *how* we are to minister : for we have all solemnly promised, at our ordination, to 'give our faithful diligence always so to minister the doctrine, and sacraments, and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and realm hath received the same.' "

Before entering upon a consideration of the points in controversy, the Bishop addressed himself briefly to the prior questions of the source and validity of the mission of the Clergy of the English Church, and of the extent and limits of their authority. On the former point he referred to the declaration of his sentiments in his recent "Sermons on the Church;" touching the latter, by way of protest against the exaggerated notions of the priestly office which had been advanced, he thus defined its true functions : "In this country the clergy of the national Church, and they alone, are entitled to the respect and obedience of the people, as their lawful guides and governors in spiritual things ; they alone are duly commissioned to preach the Word of God, and to minister His holy Sacraments. But the extent and boundaries of their ministerial authority are points which admit of a considerable diversity of opinion, even amongst those who do not question its origin or legitimacy. If it be an error, leading to, and partaking of the nature of, schism, to deny, or undervalue that authority, it is, on the other hand, injurious to the cause of truth and unity to exaggerate it, and to stretch its prerogatives beyond that which has the sure warrant of God's Word. Those persons who are driven, by the overstrained pretensions of

the clergy, to question their authority, are almost sure to withhold from them the respect to which they are justly entitled, and to consider priesthood and priest-craft as convertible terms."

And further on, after adverting to the analogy, mistaken by some for a typical relation, between the Levitical priesthood and the Christian ministry, he proceeded to draw, clearly and distinctly, the line of demarcation between the Catholic and the Romish view of the latter: "We hold, in opposition to the Church of Rome, that the offering of a propitiatory sacrifice to God is not one of the functions and privileges of the Christian ministry. Jesus Christ 'by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;' and we derogate from the absolute worthiness and sufficiency of that offering, if we suppose that any supplementary sacrifices are required for the purpose of propitiation. If 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself,' we need no other reconciler. We have indeed *our* sacrifice, and *our* altar, and *our* priesthood, to offer the one, and to minister at the other. But the sacrifice is a spiritual sacrifice, and the altar is figuratively an altar. We slay no victim, we offer no victim slain: but we commemorate the one great and final sacrifice, properly so called, in the manner appointed by our Lord; and we continually present unto God that memorial, with prayer, and thanksgiving, and an offering of our substance, and of ourselves, both soul and body; and so we apply to ourselves, through faith, the results of the one propitiatory sacrifice; and the whole is rightly, but figuratively, termed a eucharistic sacrifice, a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

"As to our priesthood, let us beware of arrogating to ourselves the character of mediators between God and men, in any sense which implies that we can stand between them and their Judge, except with reference to that mysterious efficacy which belongs to Christian inter-

mission, by whomsoever offered, if offered in faith, and which it is our special duty to offer in behalf of the people committed to our care. At the same time let us be careful to impress both ourselves and them with just notions of the real import and inherent worthiness of our office. It is ours to realize, instrumentally, to those for whom Christ died, the blessings of which the Levitical priesthood administered only the shadows. It is ours to graft them into the body of Christ's Church : to initiate them into the saving truths of the Gospel : to turn their hearts to the wisdom of the just, guiding them to Him who alone can deliver them from the bondage of sin ; declaring, as His ambassadors, the conditions and assurance of pardon ; and dispensing to His household the spiritual food of His Body and Blood : to do all this, and on that account to have the chief stations in that household, and to be entitled to the attention and respect of all who belong to it.

"Our Blessed Saviour's charge to St. Peter, and through him to all His ministers, was 'Feed my sheep.' Whatsoever acts of kindness, or authority, are requisite for the due execution of that charge, with respect to those to whom we stand in the relation of pastors, it is ours to exercise, and theirs to acknowledge and submit to : but in our ministerial acts both of kindness and authority, especially the latter, we are to have respect to the Church's laws and ordinances ; and beyond what *they* require, we may not claim obedience. And it is well that it is so : for a spiritual authority not so limited, in the hands of fallible and imperfect men, would be perverted, as in the example of Rome, to the ends of an intolerable tyranny over the secret thoughts and consciences, as well as the outward acts and observances, of those who should be subject to it."

From this general view of the Church, and of the minis-

terial office, the Bishop passed on to the consideration of individual points, which had been made the subject of controversy. In speaking of the Church's doctrine, generally, he characterized the attempt to "make the Articles look towards Rome," in terms of unqualified disapprobation, as having, in the words of Jeremy Taylor, "something of craft, but very little of ingenuousness," and being calculated, if not intended, to ensnare men in the meshes of Romanism. "The endeavour," he said, "to give a Tridentine colouring to the Articles of Religion agreed upon by the Council of London in 1562, and to extenuate the essential differences between the two Churches, is a ground of no unreasonable alarm to those whose bounden duty it is to 'banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines,' and therefore to guard against the insinuation into our Church of any one of those false opinions which she has once solemnly repudiated. It is one of the methods by which the Court of Rome has before sought to beguile the people of this country of their common sense. Bishop Stillingfleet* quotes a letter of advice given to a Romish agent, as to the best way of managing the Papal interest in England upon the King's restoration; the third head of which is, 'To make it appear underhand, how near the doctrine, worship, and discipline of the Church of England comes to us (of Rome): at how little distance her Common Prayer is from our Mass: and that the wisest and ablest men of that way (the Anglican) are so moderate, that they would willingly come over to us, or at least meet us half way. Hereby the more staid men will become more odious; and others will run out of all religion for fear of Popery.' What real good is to be effected by any attempts to make our Reformed Church appear to symbolize with that from which she has been separated, in some of the very

* Unreasonableness of Separation, Pref. p. xix.

points which formed the ground of that separation, I am at a loss to imagine. Desirable as is the unity of the Catholic Church, lamentable as have been in some directions the consequences of its interruption, earnestly as we ought to labour and pray for its restoration, we can never consent to reinstate it by embracing any one of the errors which we have renounced."

As to the probable result of this not altogether novel device for seducing the members of the English Church from their allegiance, the Bishop expressed his belief that "the number of those who were prepared to apostatize to an idolatrous Church, was very inconsiderable. But," he added, "a greater evil than the apostasy of a few, or even of many, would be the success of any attempt to establish the fact, not indeed of a perfect identity, but of something more than a sisterly resemblance, between the two Churches; and to prove, that a member of the Anglican Church can consistently hold all the errors of the Roman, except one or two of the most flagrant, and even *them*, it may be, with certain qualifications."

The doctrinal questions on which the Bishop specially dwelt were,—the relative authority of Scripture and tradition, and the sufficiency of Scripture to teach all things requisite to salvation; the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, which he vindicated, and in the course of his observations insisted on the important principle that the Liturgy has a doctrinal character, and is to be brought in aid of the sense of the Articles; the doctrine of justification by faith, and, in connexion with it, the doctrine of "reserve," which,—except in the sense of reverence in treating of the sublime mysteries of religion,—he altogether repudiated, declaring that "anything of the nature of a *disciplina arcana* he promptly rejected." In a subsequent part of the Charge the Bishop animadverted in severe terms upon the introduction, for private use, of

devotional formularies of the Romish Church, embodying addresses to Saints, intercessions for the dead, and other superstitious and unscriptural doctrines and practices; and he denounced, in language still more decisive, the practice of auricular confession, as being "utterly unknown to the primitive Church, one of the most fearful abuses of that of Rome, and the source of unspeakable abominations." In further illustration of the Romanizing tendencies manifested in certain quarters, the Bishop complained of the undutiful tone in which certain writers disparaged the Church of England, representing her as "sitting apart from the mother of Churches, and in bondage to the powers of this world;" while they protested against some of the errors of the Church of Rome only in cautious and measured terms. "I am," he said, "far from approving of those public controversial discussions, which, by exaggerated statements, sure to be made in the heat of the moment, and admitting of easy refutation, tend to promote, rather than check, the growth of Popery among us. Nor do I think it consistent with truth, to deny that the Church of Rome is a branch, however corrupt, of the Church Catholic; or with charity, to speak more strongly in condemnation of its faults, than the sacred interests of true religion require; but I hold it to be still more inconsistent with both truth and charity, to gloss over its deadly errors, and to smooth the way for their readmission. Let us not scruple to say of that Church, not for *her* condemnation, but in our own vindication and defence, and for a warning to those who are in danger of being deceived by her delusive attractions, that she is in a state of schism, if not of apostasy; that she has forsaken the true faith, and defiled herself with superstition and idolatry. And let us speak all the more plainly, seeing that she again employs, as her chosen defenders and emissaries, a Society of men bound together by a vow to uphold by all methods, and at all hazards, not Christianity, but Popery; and who,

in accordance with that vow, have framed and carried out a system so hideous in its principles, so mischievous in its effects, that it well deserves to be described as having embodied the very 'mystery of iniquity.'

"The Church of Rome has added to and debased the apostolical 'form of sound words;' has superseded the apostolical succession; has mutilated and corrupted the apostolical communion. The character of the Church itself is not altered by that of a few, or many, of its individual members, whose personal graces and virtues at once modify and recommend the principles which they profess. There is scarcely any error of doctrine, however extravagant or dangerous, which has not been held by some persons of unquestioned piety and irreproachable conduct. Against such a Church we are bound continually to lift up the voice of solemn remonstrance; and, far from being ashamed of the name of Protestant, we ought to show, that a sincere and immovable attachment to the Catholic Church, in its constitution, discipline, authority, privileges, and offices, is perfectly compatible with, or rather is itself a practical act of, protestation against the errors and corruptions of the Papal Church. And surely the duty of so protesting is not to be lost sight of at a time when that Church is boldly reasserting its pretensions amongst us, and affecting to look for the speedy return of our own Reformed Church into its maternal bosom. Its errors are not less opposed to Gospel truth and holiness now, than they were at the time of the Reformation. The doctrines, and practices, which rendered necessary our separation from that Church, are still retained by her, unchanged, unmitigated, unqualified; nor are the differences between us, in essential matters, less at the present moment, than they were in the times of Cranmer or of Jewel, of Taylor or of Bull."

In touching on the question of the Royal Supremacy, and the wish for a separation of the Church from the State, expressed by some, the Bishop observed:—"That we are

in some respects impeded and trammelled by the nature of our legal connexion with the State, is true; and this is itself one consequence which followed from the abuse of the Papal power before the Reformation; but this imperfection will in no way be remedied by the resumption of exploded principles or practices; and I cannot help suspecting that the desire of reverting to *them*, with less of impediment than now exists, is one motive with some persons, who are seeking to effect a total separation of the Church from the State. Let us do all that we have at this moment the power of doing, as the ministers of that Church; nay, let us but do all that we are bound to do, and we shall then see what further freedom of action is required. Before we cry out for a reformation of the Church's laws, let us try the effect of those which are in existence, and not complain of the insufficiency of her ordinances, till we have carried into them the spirit which is requisite to give them life and efficacy.

"It will not, I think, be denied, that the Church of this country, in point of energy, power, and usefulness, is, by God's goodness, at this moment progressive: strange, that at this very time complaints should be uttered of her wearing the chains of an ignoble thralldom, of her being compelled to mutter in indistinct accents the praises of God, and of her not affording sufficient scope for the indulgence of devotional feelings,—that Church, in which the seraphic piety of Hooker, and Hall, and Taylor, and Herbert, and Ken, and Wilson, felt no deficiency nor restraint. If instead of such lamentations, alarming our people, and unsettling the minds of our younger brethren in the ministry, we would admonish, comfort, and encourage one another, to be faithful to our dear Mother; and use, in the spirit of diligence and love, all the means and appliances of good which she places in our hands; setting ourselves, as a united band of Christian soldiers, with composed and stedfast resolution, to resist the inroads of

Popery on the one hand, and of irregular enthusiasm on the other ; if we had but grace to realize, in our own lives and persons, the plain precepts and directions which she has given for our guidance, recommending them by our example to the consciences and affections of all men, we should discover that there is much less need of alteration than is supposed ; and, at all events, we should know for a certainty in what direction that alteration should be attempted. Let us be thankful to Almighty God, that the Church, crippled and fettered as she is thought by some to be, has yet had enough of energy and power to vindicate to herself the religious education of the people ; to throw open the doors of her sanctuary to multitudes who were before excluded from it ; and to send forth within the last two years six additional bishops, to watch over the growth and fruitfulness of her distant branches."

A great portion of the Charge, and that which subsequent events caused to be regarded as its most important feature, consisted of observations and directions relative to the question of ritual observance, which, by this time, had not only excited considerable attention, and caused much strife among both Clergy and laity, but had been made the occasion of unfounded suspicion against many clergymen who, without any leaning towards the doctrinal unsoundness every now and then apparent in the "Tracts for the Times," had been led to a more careful inquiry into the rule of their ministrations, as laid down for them in the Prayer-Book, and, as the result of this examination, to a stricter observance of its rubrical directions. On this point the Bishop was enabled to appeal to the principle on which he had insisted, both before his elevation to the Episcopate,* and in his first Episcopal Charge, addressed to the Clergy of the Diocese of Chester,†—the

* See pp. 31—33.

† See pp. 56—59.

principle of "strict and punctilious conformity" to the directions of the Church. Common sense, however, of the advantage which his own consistent advocacy of this principle at a period long antecedent to the enactment involved by recent circumstances gave him, and well pleased to have the opportunity of doing as act of justice to those on whose proceedings in other respects he might think duty to animadvert, the Bishop at once frankly acknowledged the good service which the writers of the "Tracts for the Times" had done by inducing a more general obedience to the Church's ritual rule.

"It is impossible to deny," he admitted, "that a great degree of laxity has crept over us in the matter of ritual. We are much indebted to those persons and books who have forcibly recalled our attention to a matter of not too long imperfectly perceived. In some instances, indeed, they have gone beyond the line of duty and of propriety, in recommending, or prescribing, or sanctioning and recommending, or authorizing in their own Church, and in portions of others, an importation which was not properly theirs; but there can be no doubt of their having much contributed to the progress which has been made during the last few years towards a full and exact observance of the Church's ritual injunctions, as well as to a better understanding of the foundations and proportions of her polity, and the nature and value of her discipline. We ought not to overstate the real good which has been effected in our direction, whilst we contemplate with apprehension the evil which it is to be feared has been wrought in another. Every clergyman is bound by the plainest obligations of duty, to obey the directions of the Rubric. For conforming to these, in every particular, he needs no other authority than that of the Roman Pontiff. We ought not to be deterred from a scrupulous observance of the rites and customs prescribed or sanctioned by our Church, by a dread of being thought too much

about the externals of religion. If we are not to go *beyond* her ritual, at least we ought not to *fall short* of it; nor to make her public services less frequent, nor more naked and inexpressive, than she intends them to be."

And after introducing a quotation from his Charge to the clergy of the Diocese of Chester, in 1825, to show that he was "not holding any new language," the Bishop continued:—"An honest endeavour to carry out the Church's intentions, in every part of public worship, ought not to be stigmatized as Popish, or superstitious. If it be singular, it is such a singularity as should be cured, not by *one* person's desisting from it, but by *all* taking it up. When I have been asked, whether I approved of certain changes in the mode of celebrating Divine service, which were spoken of as novelties, but which were in fact nothing more than a return to the anciently established order of the Church, my answer has been, 'Far from questioning the *right* of the Clergy to observe the Rubric in every particular, I know it to be their *duty*; and the only doubt is, how far are *we* justified in not *enforcing* such observance in every instance?' It may indeed call for the exercise of a sound discretion, in certain cases, as to the time and mode of bringing about an entire conformity of your practice, in this respect, with the letter of the law; but I cannot, as it appears to me, consistently with my duty, interpose any obstacles, nor offer any objection, to its being done."

After this distinct enunciation of the general principles by which all the members of the Church and her office-bearers, of whatever station, were to be guided in this matter, the Bishop proceeded to specify those points to which he thought it desirable more particularly to direct the attention of the Clergy. These were,—the public administration of Baptism at the prescribed time; the reading of the Offertory Sentences and the Prayer for the Church Militant after the morning service; the observance

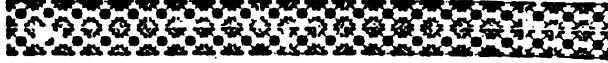
of festivals and fasts, more especially of those set apart for the commemoration of the leading events of our Lord's history; the celebration of daily service, or at least of daily matins, and that not only in town churches, but in country parishes; and the more frequent celebration of the Holy Communion. On other points of minor importance, too, and some of them of doubtful authority, the Bishop intimated his views and wishes. Without insisting on the dress prescribed by the 74th canon, he considered a distinctive clerical dress, of a very simple kind, desirable; the practice of bowing at the name of Jesus he thought obligatory; that of doing obeisance on entering and leaving churches and chancels, at least not open to serious objection, provided a proper explanation were given that no adoration to the consecrated elements was intended; a proviso from which he took occasion to express himself in decisive terms against the error of transubstantiation, or the doctrine of a "bodily," as distinguished from a "real" presence in the Holy Eucharist. To the practice of turning to the East while reading the prayers, he objected; candles upon the communion-table he pronounced admissible, provided they were lighted only when required at evening service; the decoration of the Communion table with flowers, especially with reference to the history of particular Saints, he reprobated as "something worse than frivolous." He also objected to "prayers for the dead, trine immersion in Baptism, the kiss of peace in the Eucharist, and the mixing of water with wine in the chalice," on the ground that, although "undoubtedly ancient customs," they were "not recognized by our own Church:" and with reference to these and other like points he laid it down as the general rule, that in such matters the Clergy were to be guided not by the early Church, or even the primitive Church, but by the Church of England, speaking "in plain and obvious cases by her Rubric and Canons, in doubtful and undecided cases by

her Bishops." In regard to the dress of the officiating minister, he expressed his belief that the surplice in preaching after the morning service, and the gown at the evening sermon, was most consonant with the intention of the Church. As to the manner of reading the Common Prayer, he suggested that when the congregation were not sufficiently versed in the knowledge of music to take part in the service when sung, it had better be said; but, whether said or sung, he insisted on its being done "devoutly, audibly, and distinctly;" adding, with special reference to the responses in the Communion service, that they were to be said, rather than sung, except in cathedral service. To commence Divine service with a psalm or hymn, he thought incorrect; and he suggested that the minister himself should give out the psalm at the proper times, as well as all notices; and that he should not omit to give notice of holy days and fasting days. He recommended the prayers for the Ember weeks to be used as appointed; and, in the case of a Saint's day falling on a Sunday, the Collects for both, the Epistle and Gospel for the Saint's day, and the proper Lessons for the Sunday, to be used.

From these directions it appears, that the Bishop had been at great pains to ascertain what, upon the various points which had come under his notice, as debatable matters, was either the express order, or the more or less obvious intention, of the Church, with a view to obtain, by means of a strict adherence to her rule on the part of all the clergy, such an uniformity of practice as would put an end to further controversies and dissensions about externals. Still further to encourage the clergy to adopt the counsels which he had given them, and, more especially, to act upon his recommendation of a more frequent and more decorous celebration of Divine worship, the Bishop adduced an extract from a charge of Bishop Butler to the clergy of Durham, in 1751, "as expressing the senti-

ments of a profound thinker and a wise man ; not as deeming it necessary to offer any arguments in justification of those clergymen who were desirous of obeying all the directions of the Rubric, and of exhibiting to the people what was really the established, though long-neglected, order of the Church." And lest any of them should be disheartened, in the event of their failing to see immediate fruits resulting from their more frequent and more careful performance of the offices of the Church, the Bishop reminded them, that any change in the religious habits and practice of the population must be a work of time. His own hope, evidently, was, that a general uniformity and patient perseverance in giving effect to all the provisions made by the Church for the edification of the people, would be productive of the happiest results in the promotion of true religion. "The truth is, reverend brethren," he observed, "that until the Church's intentions are completely fulfilled, as to her ritual, we do not know what the Church really is, nor what she is capable of effecting. It is the instrument by which she seeks to realize and apply her doctrines ; and the integrity and purity of the one may, as to their effect, be marred and hindered, in what degree we know not, by a defective observance of the other."





CHAPTER XXI.

Undutiful Reception of the Charge—Assumption of Episcopal Functions by the "Record"—The Evangelical Clergy—Their Refractory Conduct—Its Vexatious Consequences—Effect on Bishop Blomfield's Health—Confirmations—Addresses to the Clergy—General Compliance—Submission of the "Record"—Ecclesiastical Revolt at Islington—The Bishop of Calcutta—His Admiration of Bishop Blomfield's Charge—Newspaper Attack of the Recusant Clergy—Their Appeal to the Government—Arch-deacon Hale's Charge—The Offertory Question—Spread of Clerical Contumacy—Appeal for Support from the Laity—Lay Address to the Islington Clergy—The Proprietary Chapel and the Bishop—The "Times" and the "Quarterly"—Lay Support declined by the Bishop—Perplexing Alternative—Self-denying conduct of Bishop Blomfield.

LITTLE, when he delivered this masterly Charge, did Bishop Blomfield anticipate the effect which it was destined to produce. How, indeed, a document so able in its character, so impartial in its spirit, so legitimate as regards the authority from which it emanated, and, considering the circumstances as well as the parties to which it addressed itself, so eminently seasonable, nay, so obviously called for, could have given rise to so intemperate an outcry as that which followed its publication, it is not easy to understand. That the Bishop himself was wholly unprepared for such a reception of his pastoral counsels and directions, is evident, both from the unaffected surprise with which he beheld the storm he had unwittingly raised, and from the inability which he betrayed to cope

with its fury. Ardently desirous himself of promoting the peace and welfare of the Church, and ready to take her law for the rule of his conduct, he did not suspect the existence, among his clergy, of so wide-spread a feeling of indifference to the former, and of undutiful disregard of the latter; nor does he appear to have contemplated the possibility of his episcopal authority being so completely set at naught by those who were bound by the most solemn vows to follow his godly admonitions, and to submit themselves to his godly judgments. Still less had he calculated upon that unreasoning violence of party spirit which, wholly inaccessible to the voice of truth, would not rest content with anything short of wholesale condemnation of those to whom it was opposed, and resented the slightest word of commendation bestowed, however deservedly, on them, as an act of treason.

The lead in the unhallowed warfare against Church order and Church authority which ensued, was taken, consistently enough, by a religious newspaper of presbyterian principles, to which, as the recognised organ of the Evangelical party, the clergy of that school were too much in the habit of looking up, and which most of them were ready to take, in preference to their Bishop, for the guide of their opinions. No sooner had the echo of the Charge died away within the walls of the Cathedral, than, in the true spirit of Korah, and with an entire disregard of all decency, the *Record* assumed the ecclesiastical government of the diocese of London,—for which, on the ground of "Tractarian leanings," its Chief Pastor was deemed disqualified,—and issued a species of countercharge, of which a copy was forwarded to every clergyman in the diocese. "We have," so ran the presumptuous announcement of this arrogant proceeding, "put our remarks on the Bishop of London's Charge in circulation through the entire diocese of London:" and to this intimation a modest request was appended for contributions

to be transmitted to the office, to defray the expense of extending the circulation "through the Church."

The effect of this was,—to the great discredit of the clergy who submitted to such unauthorised dictation in opposition to their spiritual superior,—to nullify the endeavour of the Bishop to obtain a uniform obedience to the Church's rule, and thereby to relieve the Church from a reproach which formed a powerful weapon in the hands of her insidious Romanizing assailants. Although the Bishop's suggestions were complied with by many of the clergy,—by some from a sense of duty to their Ordinary, and by many more from a desire to do their part towards the abolition of party badges, and the restoration of peace and concord in the Church,—their obedience was rendered nugatory by the disobedience of the refractory portion of the clergy; and, not only so, but they were exposed to imputations of the most painful kind through the operation of ignorant prejudice, sedulously fomented, both from the pulpit and in the press, by the mouthpieces of the Evangelical school, who represented conformity to the rule of the Church, and the expressed wishes of the Bishop for its stricter observance, as a sure token of "Puseyism" and of "Romanizing tendencies."

To the Bishop himself these results of his Charge—so diametrically opposed to what he had intended and expected—were a source of bitter disappointment, and,—as individual instances of the mischief which had been caused were brought under his notice,—of perpetual vexation. He had not, indeed, to reproach himself with any undue exercise of power, or any deviation from the straight line of duty, still less with any partiality towards the Tractarian movement; on the contrary, what he had done, was simply the consistent acting out of the convictions which he had cherished from his earliest days, and expressed at the very commencement of his Episcopal

career,—that conformity with the Church's rule, in regard to ritual observances, was both obligatory upon Bishops and clergy, and eminently conducive to the efficiency of the Church : at the same time he could not conceal from himself that, by forming too favourable an estimate of the conscientiousness of a not inconsiderable portion of his clergy, he had altogether miscalculated the strength of his own position ; a conclusion which, especially to a mind accustomed to view a careful regard to consequences as an essential ingredient of practical wisdom, could not be otherwise than deeply mortifying. The effect of all this upon a more than ordinarily sensitive mind, and a physical constitution severely taxed at an early period of his life by excessive application to study, and, subsequently, by the indefatigable discharge of the arduous duties of his station, was such as might have been anticipated. Early in the year 1843 the Bishop's health began to exhibit unequivocal, though not at the time alarming, symptoms of general derangement. Impaired action of the digestive organs, accompanied by nervous debility,—the precursors of latent mischief developed at a later period,—reduced the once vigorous Prelate to a condition which, though it did not at any time interfere with the regular performance of his duties, deprived him of much of his wonted energy and decision. Nevertheless, under the impression that he ought not to acquiesce in the course which was then shown towards the law of the Church and the episcopal authority, he served himself to a great measure to induce a proper and decent conformity to the law of the clergy committed to his charge. During the summer of 1844 confirmations in the spring of the year 1845, he addressed, after each confirmation, the clergy of the district, representing to them the great amount of neglect who had hitherto neglected to carry out the rules and recommendations contained in the laws and planning out to them the injury which would result from such

lated to inflict upon the Church and the cause of religion, as well as the advantage which it gave to the very parties to whom the recusant clergy were opposed, and the unjust suspicions which it entailed upon their more dutiful brethren. For a whole fortnight the Bishop continued to reiterate this appeal to the several bodies of clergy whom he met from day to day, in the most important metropolitan parishes,—which stood first in order in the appointed course of confirmations,—without any show or symptom of opposition. The clergy of the parishes of St. James and St. John, Westminster; St. George, Hanover-Square; St. Martin's-in-the-Fields; Highgate; Bethnal-Green; St. Marylebone, and All Souls; St. Andrew's, Holborn; Christ Church, Newgate Street; St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate; Woodford; West Ham; Clerkenwell; and Hackney, with their districts, and adjacent parishes, had all received the admonitions and commands of the Bishop with the deference due to his authority, and most of them had already begun to comply with them, or announced their intention to do so from their pulpits. In the remoter country districts of the diocese, which in the order of his confirmations the Bishop would not reach till the summer and autumn, the clergy were anticipating his wishes by taking counsel with each other, and determining, where they had not already done so, in accordance with the suggestions made to them by their Diocesan at the late Visitation, to revive the practices enjoined by the Rubric, which had fallen into disuse. Even the *Record* began to despair of maintaining its rival Episcopate, and sought to escape from the unseemly position which it had made for itself by giving its own version of the Bishop's addresses to his clergy, and treating the requirements made by him as matters of no real importance.

“The Bishop of London,” said the organ of the Evangelical party, “has taken one more step. He has turned some of the suggestions of his Charge into *injunctions*.”

After giving a garbled account of the Bishop's remarks and of his requirements,—which were represented as being limited to the use of the Prayer for the Church Militant after the sermon, and the giving out of the psalms or hymns by the officiating minister, instead of the clerk,—the journalist went on to state that he did not apprehend that there would be any resistance to his Lordship's directions. "The general conclusion," the writer continued, "arrived at by the clergy in the last autumn was, we believe, that they would obey"—a profession the sincerity of which was shortly after put to the test—"any positive *injunctions* of the Bishop, not being inconsistent with the rubric or canons; but that they would wait until distinct *injunctions* were given, before they introduced any changes in the present excitable state of the public mind. His Lordship having now issued these *injunctions*, they will be able to explain to their congregations the reasons on which they act; to show that the step is not a voluntary one on their parts; and thus to make the whole question one of simple obedience to Church authority. We cannot, of course, express any satisfaction at this step. We should have been glad if the subject had been allowed to go to sleep. At the same time it is some consolation to observe that there is nothing intrinsically objectionable in the changes commanded; and that, had the order been given in 1823, instead of 1843, it probably would scarcely have caused a single hour's sensation."

Thus the matter stood on Monday evening, the 15th of May, 1843. On the afternoon of the following Wednesday, the Bishop proceeded to hold his confirmation at St. Mary's, Islington; and to the clergy of that parish, headed by their Vicar, himself the son of a Bishop, belongs the equivocal honour of having raised the standard of ecclesiastical rebellion against their Chief Pastor, and the primary responsibility of all the disastrous consequences which have

since flowed from the subversion of ecclesiastical order in the metropolitan diocese. Instead of receiving, as their brethren elsewhere had done, the "injunctions" of their Ordinary with the reverence due both to his office and to the undeniable lawfulness of his commands, the Islington clergy remonstrated against the Bishop's directions, which they pronounced "impracticable;" and by their representations as to the difficulties in which an attempt to comply with them would place them, they so far wrought upon the Bishop's mind, that, without withdrawing the substance of his requirements, he expressed himself willing to leave the time for introducing the several alterations in the service to their own discretion. What use was made of the concession thus wrung from Bishop Blomfield's kindness and willingness to 'conciliate, will presently appear. Meanwhile it is due to the truth of history, and may serve as a further illustration of the spirit in which the resistance to the Bishop's recommendations was conducted, to record the fact that the father of the Vicar of Islington, the venerable Bishop of Calcutta, whose name was freely made use of by the recusant clergy as a counterpoise to the authority of their own Diocesan, was so far from sympathizing with their views and proceedings, that, on the contrary, he expressed, both in India and in his correspondence with friends in England, the warmest approval of the course pursued by the Bishop of London. He spoke of the Bishop's Charge in terms of high admiration, considering it the most important demonstration as yet made against the Tractarians,—nay, one of the most important documents connected with the history of the Church of England since the Reformation; and as the best proof of the estimation in which he held it, he actually reprinted it for circulation among his clergy in India. And when subsequently he heard of the attacks which had been made upon the Charge in England on its first appearance, he expressed his disapproval and

regret at the spirit of opposition which had been manifested towards it, observing that his opinion of its value and importance remained unaltered, and that he considered the Bishop of London had acted wisely in dwelling fully,—after his condemnation of the Tractarian errors,—on the rubrical directions of the Church. All this information, which could not be unknown to the clergy who took the most prominent part in opposition to the Bishop, was forwarded for insertion to the *Record*, but deliberately suppressed: for the war-whoop had gone forth, and to let the voice of truth and justice be heard, would have spoiled the game which religious faction was resolved to play out at any cost and at all hazards.

The *animus* of the appeal which the Islington clergy made to the Bishop on the ground of the difficulties in which they would be placed if he were to enforce what they called his “impracticable” injunctions, was not long left doubtful. The external deference and decorum which the Bishop’s ever dignified presence had imposed upon the remonstrants, was shaken off the moment his back was turned. The daily morning organ of the Evangelical party contained, on the very next morning after the meeting of the Bishop with the Islington clergy, a letter from “Presbyters of the Church of England,” in which they complained bitterly of “the degradation to which the Bishop was subjecting the most gifted and the most indefatigable”—as the writers had the modesty to designate themselves—“of his clergy. Can his Lordship,” was the question publicly asked concerning their Bishop by these self-constituted models of clerical conduct, “ever be venerated afterwards with that love and affection which the clergy should entertain towards their spiritual Father in Christ? Will not such a course of proceeding be deemed a sad indication of a self-willed and despotic spirit, utterly destructive of the sacred tie which should bind in closest union the spiritual Overseer and the clergy committed

to his charge?" And, lest the Bishop should fail to give heed to the anonymous remonstrance of these dutiful presbyters, volunteering to extract the mote from the eye of their Chief Pastor, the writers called upon clergy and laity to "send up petitions to Her Majesty, as the temporal Head of the Church, that these obnoxious alterations be not forced upon them;" and in a separate letter, addressed to Sir Robert Peel, it was suggested that "the Bishop of London should be advised by the Government not to pursue a course the evil consequences of which none could calculate."

On the very day on which this indecent attack was made upon the Bishop, Archdeacon Hale addressed to the clergy of the Archdeaconry of London his first Visitation Charge, in which, after enforcing the general duty of obedience to all the lawful commands of those placed in authority, he dwelt more particularly on "the power of the offertory as a means of promoting union in the Church throughout the kingdom, and of meeting in some degree the exigencies created by the rapid increase of population, and the concentration of large masses of the people." In the course of his remarks on this subject the Archdeacon entered into a calculation, shewing that even from mere penny contributions an annual revenue of half a million sterling might by this means be obtained for the Church of England. The opportunity of appealing to that most susceptible *sensorium*, the pocket, which this well-meant, but not, perhaps, very well-timed ecclesiastical budget afforded, was not lost upon the opponents of ritual conformity. Although it was scarcely possible that a Charge delivered on the 18th should have been the cause of the practical difficulties pleaded by the Islington clergy on the day before, this disclosure, as it was represented, of the "ulterior objects" of the Bishop by the Archdeacon was now put in the forefront of the battle, as one of the principal reasons for resisting the Bishop's injunctions. The

power of taxation assumed by the Bishop, it was supposed was highly unconstitutional: the importation of contributions into this new channel was not obvious and in way of averting the crisis with which the Church was then threatened, it was hinted that the refusal of the Churchwardens to collect alms in Tractarian fashion, and for Tractarian purposes, would effectively put an end to this ingenious device for raising the people in the same breath, as it were, of their money and of their faith.

The matter was now brought right before the eyes of the laity, to support the clergy in their resistance to their Bishop. Within a week after surrendering at Amersham to the "unobjectionable," though unsatisfactory, measures of the Bishop, the *Record* announced that, encouraged by the success attending the opposition of the living in some various incumbents to the East of London and elsewhere, protested, and been excused from compliance; while others who had reluctantly made up their minds to submit, were now retracting. "More money," was the triumphant conclusion of the Evangelical journalist, "will be the state of the diocese in a few more Sundays." "Seeing as this prospect was to the enemies of Church union, some little uneasiness was occasioned by the consideration that the Bishop had the law of the Church clearly on his side, and might possibly see fit to put it in force, by way of making an example of some of the recalcitrant clergy. Against such a contingency it was necessary to guard; and in no way could this be done more effectually than by stirring up the laity to take part in the ecclesiastical crisis. "Many of the clergy," the *Record* intimated "are now looking to the laity for support. This they ought to receive; or the Bishop will erroneously imagine, as we believe he does now imagine, and has declared, that the laity feel no objection to the proposed changes; and that the difficulty and repugnance is wholly on the part of the

clergy. The people ought not to leave their ministers in this position. They ought at once, in some intelligible way, to apprise their Diocesan of their feelings, on a point concerning which his Lordship is evidently under great misapprehension." Such an appeal was not, of course, left unanswered. Meetings were held, resolutions passed, and memorials drawn up, addressed, some to the clergy, urging them to persevere in their resistance to the Bishop, others to the Bishop himself, warning him to desist from the attempt to "introduce novelties" subversive of the Protestant faith. The Islington clergy were speedily fortified by a lay address, in which they were "respectfully, but earnestly entreated to refrain from making any alteration in the mode of conducting the public service of the Church, which had prevailed for more than a century;" and the congregation of a fashionable proprietary chapel at the West End, headed by a controversial baronet, "respectfully entreated" the Bishop himself, to "allow them to have the Church service as preached (*sic*!) to their fathers, without mutilations or additions, which, though they might appear trivial, they could only view as the insidious advances of those doctrines, which they firmly and conscientiously believed could only tend, if adopted and enforced, to the re-establishment of Popery, and the overthrow of the Church of England." It was in vain that the Bishop endeavoured, in a tone of calm dignity, to correct the misapprehensions industriously propagated by some of his own clergy. Truth, reason, and charity, were alike unavailing against the tide of ignorance, prejudice, and party bitterness, that was poured forth in all directions. The *Times*, which had originally taken the Bishop's part, veered round to the point of the compass indicated by public clamour, and, with an unction becoming the subject, wrote up the popular side. And although it was not thought expedient by the Queen's Ministers to put in motion the authority of the Crown for

the purpose of prohibiting a Bishop from enjoining upon his clergy obedience to the law of the Church, the view taken of the question in high political circles was sufficiently indicated by an article from the pen of one of the most caustic writers of the Tory party, for the production of which the *Quarterly Review* anticipated by a whole month its regular period of publication.

While the agitation was at its height, a lay address to the Bishop was put into circulation, in which the memorialists expressed "their respectful gratitude for his Lordship's late interposition in favour of a stricter observance of the rubrics, and a more solemn and decorous administration of the services of the Church:" but the Bishop, who had been made acquainted with the proposed movement for his support, intimated his objection to receive such an address, on the ground that it would lay him open to addresses of an opposite character. Indeed it was made no secret, that in the event of any lay declaration in favour of the observance of the Church's rubrics being presented, a great counter demonstration would be made under the auspices of Lord Ashley, now the Earl of Shaftesbury. Independently, however, of this menace, the Bishop was doubtless alive to the fact, that Episcopal authority could only be further compromised by the countenance which his reception of such an address would give to the notion of the laity being entitled formally to pronounce their opinions for and against its exercise. Possibly, too, he might be influenced by the consideration that the list of signatures to be appended to the address in support of his Charge would necessarily comprise many distinguished names more or less associated in the public mind with the Tractarian movement, and that thus the prejudice which connected the directions of his Charge with that movement would be strengthened.

That the Bishop acted wisely in declining to become, however indirectly, a party to an appeal to the tribunal of

public opinion upon such a question, cannot admit of a doubt. But it may be doubted whether he would not have acted still more wisely, if he had adopted the obvious course of appealing to the regularly constituted tribunals for the enforcement of the law of the Church, and the maintenance of the authority of his office. An increased degree of irritation would, doubtless, in the first instance have been produced by such an appeal: but it is far from improbable, that the innate reverence of the English mind for the supremacy of law would in due time have come to the Bishop's aid, and would have enlisted on his side calm judgment and the sense of right. And however painful the excesses to which, during the heat of the conflict, individual clergymen, and, in a few instances perhaps, their congregations, might have been carried, it admits of a question whether the evils which have since arisen from the confessed failure of ecclesiastical discipline; from the discouragement inflicted on the sound and moderate portion of the clergy, who were prepared to support their Bishop, both in his opposition to Romanizing tendencies, and in the maintenance of Church order; from the offence given to many minds, whose allegiance to the Church of England was, indeed, shaken, but might, nevertheless, have been retained and strengthened by a firm assertion of the authority of the Church; from the triumph of popular clamour over the principle of law and order in matters of religion; and from the unlimited licence taken on both sides in ritual matters, the natural result of the defeat which Church authority had been suffered to sustain in its conflict with ecclesiastical insubordination,—are not evils fully as great, and more permanent in their effects than any temporary inconveniences to which a determined enforcement of the law of the Church, and an unflinching exercise of episcopal power, might have given rise. But whatever may be the verdict which the more impartial judgment of future historians may pronounce upon a

question in regard to which the contemporary chronicler can hardly escape from the bias of personal convictions, it may be unhesitatingly affirmed, that in the course which he was led to adopt, Bishop Blomfield was actuated by the most earnest and anxious desire to consult the welfare of the Church. For one who had long been accustomed to "speak, exhort, and rebuke with all authority," and to "let no man despise him," it was, assuredly, no light act of self-denial to allow the voice of contumacy to dictate within the province of his lawful rule, and passively to endure the contempt cast upon his office, and upon the legitimate exercise of its functions; no light act of self-denial for one who had all his life been the strenuous advocate of ecclesiastical order, to give up the vindication of that order as a hopeless task. One who on entering upon the duties and responsibilities of the Episcopal office, had resolved "by the blessing of God to guide himself in the exercise of the authority entrusted to him by the maxim," that "the safest rule for one in office is, strictly to observe the laws which define and prescribe his duties,—a rule not less applicable to the parochial clergy, who are to obey the laws ecclesiastical, than to their diocesan Bishops, who are at once to obey and to enforce them," could not assuredly be brought to surrender that maxim, and to depart from this rule, without a severe internal struggle, nor otherwise than under an overpowering sense of the necessity of the sacrifice, both of his long cherished convictions, and of his character for consistency,—to say nothing of personal feelings,—which he was imposing upon himself.





CHAPTER XXII.

Surrender of Episcopal Authority—Circular to the Clergy—Alleged Retraction of the Charge—Increase of Rubrical Strife—Difficulties of the Clergy—Helplessness of the Bishop—Fruitless attempts to soften Prejudice—Dregs of the Cup of Mortification—The Archbishop's Letter—Recognition of the Principle of Bishop Blomfield's Charge—Justification of the Recusants—Plea for suspension of Hostilities—Temporary Pacification—The Hyper-Ritualists—St. Paul's Knightsbridge—St. Barnabas, Pimlico—Preliminary Inspection—Consecration—Ritual Developments—Interference of the Bishop—Visitation Charge of 1850—The Church Service made "histrionic"—Imitation of the Romish Ceremonial—Resignation of the Incumbent of St. Paul's—Continuance of Ritual Disputes—Reflexions of Bishop Blomfield—Explanation of his Motives.

HAVING—right or wrong—arrived at the conclusion that a due regard for the peace of the Church required at his hands the sacrifice of his long-cherished convictions, as well as of his character for consistency, Bishop Blomfield applied himself without loss of time to the task—that too, a hopeless one, had he been able to dive into futurity,—of tranquillizing the public mind. Taking advantage of the exaggerations on the subject of the offertory, for which Archdeacon Hale's Charge had been made the pretext, the Bishop addressed a circular to his clergy, in explanation of the remarks which he had addressed to them on the occasion of his late confirmations, in which he formally disclaimed the intention imputed to

him in some quarters, of endeavouring to force upon them a weekly offertory. "I observed," the Bishop said, "that the question of collecting alms at the offertory, when there was no Communion, was one which I had left, and must still leave, to the discretion of the clergy; that I should indeed rejoice to see the time when the state of the Church should be such as to make a weekly offertory practicable; but that such, I found, was far from being the case at present; and that I could not venture to do more than recommend—and I *only* recommended—the clergy to adopt that mode of collecting when charity sermons were preached for specific objects." After some further remarks in relation to the offertory, concluding with a hope that "by proper explanation on the part of the clergy those of the laity who objected to the practice might be reconciled to it," the Bishop went on to say: "I extended the expression of that hope to some other points of ritual uniformity, which I spoke of as desiring their introduction, but as leaving the time of introducing them to your judgment; being persuaded that an agreement on the part of the clergy on these matters would remove most of the apparent difficulties." And then, again reverting to the offertory, the Bishop instanced the collection made during the preceding year,—principally by means of the offertory,—for the Colonial Bishops' Fund, as an encouragement to the clergy to adopt that mode of proceeding still more generally on the occasion of collections for Church purposes, and repeated the expression of his hope that the opposition to it, "upon the extent of which he confessed that he had not calculated," would be withdrawn. "At all events," he added, in conclusion, "my recommendation of this matter, which after all is nothing more than occasionally applying to the *whole* congregation a form to which *those who communicate* submit without question or demur, ought not in fairness to be regarded as indicating a disposition to favour any peculiar

theological opinions, least of all those against which, I may venture to say, few persons have protested more distinctly or emphatically than myself."

Scanty and, perhaps not unintentionally, vague as was the reference made in this circular to the general question of rubrical observances, it was sufficient for the purposes of those who were resolved that the Bishop's attempt to induce ritual uniformity should be defeated. The Islington clergy lost no time in informing the laity of the parish, in reply to the memorial which had been presented to them, that "in consequence of the letter recently circulated by the Bishop among his clergy, they felt at liberty to adhere to their usual mode of conducting the services of the Church." The success of the Ecclesiastical revolt in the parish of Islington was proclaimed, trumpet-tongued, by the organs of the Evangelical party; the Bishop's circular was treated as a wholesale retraction of his Charge; the *Record* interpreted the phrase "and other points of ritual uniformity," to mean the use of the prayer for the Church Militant, and the giving out of the psalms and hymns by the minister, which, it alleged, were "the only other points adverted to" in the Bishop's addresses to his clergy. In the construction so put upon his words the Bishop had now no option but to acquiesce; nor was he long in discovering the truth of what he had, on another occasion, himself so ably urged, that concession at the expense of principle is not the way to secure peace. The rubrical strife raged more fiercely than ever in his diocese; and while his own position was not less perplexing, it was more helpless than before. As regards the recusant clergy at Islington and elsewhere, the conflict between them and the Bishop was, of course, at an end; and their congregations being for the most part like-minded with them, the peace of their parishes, too, was not disturbed. But even in their case it is open to serious doubt whether their spiritual influence upon their flocks

did not suffer material injury by the fact of their having called on the laity to assist them in their resistance to the law and to their Ecclesiastical superior. In other parishes, where the clergy had acted upon the Bishop's recommendations and injunctions, the case was very different. Those who had done so reluctantly, had, it is true, no difficulty in retracing their steps: but they could not do so without exposing themselves to the reproach of a vacillating policy, regulated by the regard of man rather than by principle. Many of the clergy, however, were not prepared to recede from the position which they had taken up under the advice of their Bishop. Some of them had hailed the voice of authority which pointed out to them a course of action consonant with their own views; and not a few of these, possibly, attached an undue value to the externals of religion, and were therefore unwilling to relinquish what they considered an important gain. Others, who might have been content to have gone on in their old accustomed way, had been led to take of their ordination engagements in regard to ritual observances a stricter view; and matters to which they had never perhaps given much thought, had thus become with them matters of conscience. In all these cases the difficulty was thrown back from the diocese and the Bishop upon the individual parish and its clergyman, who, if his parishioners, or any considerable number of them, were averse to the changes introduced in the performance of Divine service, was placed in a painful dilemma between the dictates of his conscience and the demands of his flock, often urged in the most irreverent and hostile spirit; with the additional aggravation of having the example of his Bishop held up to him, as an unanswerable argument against what was termed obstinate and self-willed adherence to Tractarian practices. The result of all this was great discomfort and perplexity of mind to many of the clergy; alienation, in not a few instances, between them and their parishioners;

the most perfect indifference," and to "ask with all humility, (*sic*!) whether a less haughty and dictatorial manner than that which he had assumed in addressing them, would not be more befitting and consistent with the functions and character of his sacred office,"—Bishop Blomfield must indeed have felt that he was drinking to the very dregs the bitter cup of mortification. However clear he might feel in his own conscience as to the motives by which he had been actuated throughout, he could hardly resist the conviction thus forced upon him, that he had committed one of the most fatal mistakes in the government of mankind,—the confession of weakness, in the shape of a sacrifice of principle, on the part of those in authority.

So distressing grew, at last, the ever-recurring outbreaks of ecclesiastical and parochial strife, both in the diocese of London, and in other dioceses, that the Archbishop of Canterbury took the alarm, and endeavoured to pour oil on the troubled waters by addressing, at the commencement of the year 1845, to the clergy and laity of his province an earnest plea for peace and mutual forbearance. The principle of this document was, while leaving everything undefined and undecided, to obtain from the members of the Church, clergy and laity, an universal acquiescence in the then existing state of things, and a consequent abandonment of all disputes. After recapitulating the circumstances under which "a diversity of practice had arisen, which was not only inconsistent with the principle of uniformity maintained by the Church, but was sometimes associated in the minds of the people with peculiarities of doctrine, and gave birth to suspicions and jealousies destructive of the confidence which should always subsist between the flock and their pastor," the Archbishop's letter thus proceeded to recognize the principle on which the Bishop of London's much abused Charge was founded :—"To prevent the increase of an evil which

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might terminate in actual schisms, was confessedly most desirable; and the most effectual mode of accomplishing the object, it has been thought, would be found in general conformity to the Rubric. Universal concurrence in this easy and obvious regulation would have combined the several advantages of securing compliance with the law of the Church and the land, of putting a stop to unauthorized innovations, and of excluding party distinctions, in their character decidedly unchristian, from the public worship of God; and I cannot but regret that measures which, with a view to these good purposes, have been recommended by high authorities, should not have been received with unanimous acquiescence, as the means of restoring order and peace, without any departure from the principles of the Church, or offence to the most scrupulous conscience."

Having thus done full justice not only to the correctness, but to the wisdom, of the course marked out in Bishop Blomfield's Charge, the Archbishop's letter, which had for its object to gain the ear of both parties, went on to plead the cause of the objectors, and to enumerate the various grounds of justification which might be alleged in their behalf. The letter concluded by "most earnestly recommending, for the present, the discontinuance of any proceedings, in either direction, on the controverted questions;" at the same time holding out a distant hope of "a final arrangement at a convenient season," the "season" which, proverbially, "never comes." The effect of the Archbishop's letter was, in some degree at least, answerable to its object. It satisfied nobody; but it presented an opportunity for all who were weary of contention about the externals of religion, to withdraw from the conflict without retracting their opinions, or compromising their principles. What the Archbishop proposed, was, not a pacification on terms on which the belligerent parties were not likely to be brought to an

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agreement, but merely a temporary truce, a suspension of hostilities "for the present." This the most determined rubrician might grant without a sacrifice of consistency; and the result was a very general subsidence of the existing excitement. In places where the popular feeling was very decidedly opposed to the observances involved in a strict compliance with the rubric, the clergy for the most part accommodated themselves to the views of the majority; while in other places, where they had sufficient firmness of character, and possessed the confidence of their flocks as to the soundness of their theological views, adherence to the directions of the Prayer-book was maintained: and as questions of a graver character soon began to claim the attention, and to divide afresh the sympathies, of Churchmen, the unhappy disputes about the externals of worship might have died out, but for the indiscreet zeal of a few extreme ritualists.

Foremost among the churches of the metropolis in which ritualism was carried to excess, was the church of St. Paul, Knightsbridge, the consecration of which was coincident with the commencement of the ritual conflict in the diocese. From the very first its Incumbent had taken advantage of the general licence consequent upon the repudiation of the Church's prescribed order by the Evangelical party, for the purpose of pushing ritual observances far beyond the recommendations contained in the Bishop's charge of 1842. The Bishop's remark that "until the Church's intentions were completely fulfilled as to her ritual," it could not be known "what the Church really was, or what she was capable of effecting," was tortured by the Incumbent of St. Paul's into an invitation to the clergy to "improve,"—with a view to "the full development" of the Church,—upon the Anglican ritual, by the importation into it of observances borrowed from the Church in bygone ages, or, as he himself expressed it, "the unreformed Church—the Church when she was in communion with Rome." In

vain did the Bishop privately remonstrate against these irregularities when brought under his notice; in vain did he, in his Visitation Charge of 1846, publicly complain, in pointed allusion to the church at Knightsbridge, and to several other churches where similar extravagances were indulged in, that some congregations "had been prepared for the admission, first, of the ceremonies, and then of the doctrines, of the Church of Rome, by the introduction of unauthorized forms and gestures into the celebration of Divine service, especially in the administration of the Sacraments." The hyper-ritualists, headed by the Incumbent of St. Paul's, continued to overload the services of their Churches more and more with mediæval additions, until matters were brought to a crisis by the ritual excesses of St. Barnabas, Pimlico. This Church,—in other respects a noble monument of zeal and devotion,—had been designed from the first, as was afterwards avowed, with an express "reference to ritual observances and practices over and above the literal rubric, bearing on the state of the Church prior to the Reformation." It was, in fact, according to the Incumbent's own description, "a Church of very remarkable construction and arrangement,—so remarkable that it was certain to provoke the obloquy of the multitude." So strong were, as the time for its consecration approached, the misgivings of the Incumbent as to the light in which its appearance might strike the Bishop, that he contrived to obtain a previous visit of inspection, the real object of which the Bishop does not seem to have suspected, any more than the ulterior designs which underlay the various arrangements and decorations brought under his notice. The Church was consecrated on St. Barnabas' day, 1850; and three weeks did not elapse after the consecration, before the Bishop's attention was called to the extraordinary ritual developments,—far exceeding anything that had ever been attempted in St. Paul's,—exhibited in the services of the new church.

A correspondence ensued between the Bishop and the Incumbent of St. Paul's, in the course of which the latter advanced, in justification of his practices, views altogether incompatible not only with the ritual provisions, but with the doctrines of the English Church. While this correspondence was pending, the period for the Bishop's quadrennial Visitation arrived, when he took the opportunity of recording his public protest against this system of mischievous innovation.

"It has been," he said, "a subject of great uneasiness to me to see the changes which have been gradually introduced by a few of the clergy, at variance, as I think, with the spirit of the Church's directions; and, in some instances, with their letter. It has been always esteemed an evidence of the wisdom and moderation of those who framed our Common Prayer, that they retained 'such ceremonies as they thought best to the setting forth of God's honour and glory, and to the reducing of the people to a most perfect and godly living, without error or superstition, putting away other things which they perceived to be most abused, as in men's ordinances it often chanceth diversely in divers countries.' But this principle has been lost sight of by the persons to whom I allude; and they have presumed, following their own private judgment, and not the rules nor intention of the Church, to introduce, one by one, those very forms and observances which the reformers of our Liturgy had purposely discontinued and laid aside, but which it is now sought to revive, some of them for the first time since the Reformation. These innovations have, in some instances, been carried to such a length as to render the Church service almost *histrionic*. I really cannot characterise by any gentler term the continual changes of posture, the frequent genuflexions, the crossings, the peculiarities of dress, and some of the decorations of churches, to which I allude. They are,

after all, a poor imitation of the Roman ceremonial, and furnish, I have no doubt, to the observant members of that Church, a subject, on the one hand, of ridicule, as being a faint and meagre copy of their own gaudy ritual, and, on the other hand, of exultation, as preparing those who take delight in them to seek a further gratification of their taste in the Roman communion."

After recalling to the recollection of the clergy what had fallen from him on this subject in his two previous Charges, the Bishop continued:—"I had hoped that these distinct expressions of my^s opinions would have the effect of checking the innovations alluded to, and of awakening those of the clergy of my diocese who had departed the furthest from the simplicity of our reformed ritual, to a sense of the danger of all endeavours to assimilate it to the Roman ceremonial, and to the inconsistency of such endeavours with their own obligations, as ministers of our reformed Church, bound by solemn pledges to observe her rules, and to carry out her intentions. That expectation has been disappointed; neither my public exhortations, nor my private admonitions, have produced the desired effect. I have been told that I had no authority to forbid anything which was not in express terms forbidden by law; and that practices which, though purposely^s laid aside by the Church, and so by implication condemned, have not been actually prohibited, are therefore lawful; and that canonical obedience to a Bishop is only that which he can enforce in a court of law: and so the innovations which I objected to, have been persisted in, with additional changes introduced from time to time, with the manifest purpose of assimilating the services of our Reformed Church as nearly as possible to those of the Roman. Once more I declare my entire disapproval of such practices, and my earnest wish that, while every direction of the rubric and canons is observed where it is

possible, no form should be introduced into the celebration of public worship which is not expressly prescribed by them, or sanctioned by long-established usage."

Whatever effect these admonitions and warnings might produce upon others, the Incumbent of St. Paul's had gone too far to recede. Unwilling to submit himself to the judgment of his Diocesan, and equally unwilling to expose himself to the risk as well as discomfort of legal proceedings, he placed his resignation at the disposal of the Bishop, who felt it his duty to the Church to accept it; and although the final decision was in some degree accelerated by the popular commotion consequent upon the establishment of a Romish hierarchy in England towards the close of the year 1850, it is evident on the face of the correspondence, that it could not, under any circumstances, have terminated otherwise than in the retirement from his position in the diocese of the clergyman who had deliberately set up his own opinion on ritual matters, as an authority superior to that of his Bishop. Unhappily, however, his removal failed to put an end to the ritual disputes of which the two churches of St. Paul and St. Barnabas had been made the scene and the subject. Of the further progress of these disputes it may suffice here to remark, that while they were undoubtedly provoked by the ill-judged continuance of some, at least, of the practices formally condemned by the Bishop, the opposition to those practices has been conducted with a degree of puritanical violence and bitterness singularly accordant with the spirit which, fifteen years ago, set at defiance the Bishop's counsels of peace, and his admonitions to godly concord, and to dutiful conformity with the law in the public service of God. The confusion and strife entailed thereby upon the metropolitan diocese, while it has proved a great hindrance to God's work in the Church, and to the progress of the Gospel among the people, as well as an occasion of much sin and scandal,

has, by the harassing effect which it produced upon his mind, had no small share in prematurely depriving the diocese of a Bishop not more distinguished, for his eminent abilities and indefatigable labours, than for the sincerity of his devotion to the welfare of the Church.

The humiliating record of the transactions which form the subject of the preceding narrative, cannot be more appropriately closed than by the following reflexions penned by Bishop Blomfield himself, on the occasion of his Visitation in 1846, when he thus referred to the discussion to which his attempt to induce the ritual uniformity unquestionably contemplated and enjoined by the law of the Church, had given rise :—" I might not unfitly avail myself of the present opportunity to do that which I forbore from doing during the heat and violence of that discussion. I might enter into a lengthened defence of the opinions and counsels which I submitted to you on that occasion, and vindicate myself from imputations which no person, who did not wilfully misconstrue, or strangely misunderstand, the plain language of the Charge, would have thought of casting upon me. I might easily fortify the position which I had taken, in all its most important points, by the authority of many of the ablest defenders of our reformed Church, and re-assert, under cover of their venerable names, what I am persuaded are the true principles of its doctrine and discipline. But I wish to forbear from all controversial reasoning on the topics touched upon in that Charge; lest I should revive disputes which are now happily subsiding, if they are not yet completely at rest. Nor would anything tempt me to vindicate myself at the expense of the Church's peace."

This self-denying declaration was followed by a brief explanation of the motives which had dictated the ritual suggestions of his Charge, and by an expression of his regret that " the refusal of a comparatively small number

of the clergy to act upon his recommendation," had "precluded the advantage which he had hoped might result from its general adoption." Lastly, in vindication of the course which, in the face of that refusal, he had pursued, the Bishop added the following apologetic statement:—"Desirable as uniformity appeared to me to be, I could not but think that it would be purchased too dearly, at the price of that increased irritation and discord, which would certainly have resulted from an attempt on my part to enforce, in every instance, compliance with those rules the observance of which I had contented myself with recommending in my Charge. I therefore deemed it right, after consulting with those whose opinions I was bound to respect, to inform the clergy, as opportunity offered, that I did not require them to observe that degree of rubrical strictness which I had spoken of as greatly to be desired. At the same time it is manifest, that I was not at liberty to direct any clergyman not to do that which the letter of the law enjoined him to do. The utmost length to which I could go, was, to abstain from enforcing his observance of it, and to intimate to him, in private and confidential communication, my doubt as to the wisdom of his persevering in such observances, when he found it impossible to remove, by argument and explanation, the objections of the great majority of his people.

"I am aware that some of the parochial clergy thought it was my duty to uphold them, at all hazards, in opposition to their parishioners, by requiring of them a strict compliance with the letter of the rubric. But it is evident that if I had done this in any *one* Church of my diocese, I must have done it in *all*; a course of proceeding upon which I was not prepared to enter, with a clear view before me of the certain consequences which would follow from it. Under all the circumstances of the case I thought myself bound to consult the peace of the Church, rather than the wishes of individual clergymen, or my own

character for consistency: and I cannot but hope that those of my brethren who were at the moment disposed to complain of my not having effectually supported them in their endeavours to carry out my recommendations, will see, upon reflection, the extreme hazard of the only method by which I could have done so, and will make due allowance for the difficulties in which I was placed.

“In justice to myself, I am bound to state that upon a calm and careful review of the opinions contained in my last Charge, I cannot discover any to which I need scruple to avow my continued adherence. Those which relate entirely to questions of doctrine, I think I was called upon by the actual state of the Church to declare freely, and without reserve. They are not matters which admit of any question of expediency, nor may they be made the subjects of any temporising policy, as far as relates to the open avowal of them, with whatever degrees of charity we may think it right to tolerate the maintenance of different opinions on the part of others. But with respect to matters of outward observance, I do not know that I should have felt myself bound to press my opinions upon the clergy, notwithstanding the plainness of the rule which they are required to follow, had I been fully aware of the amount of prejudice and misinformation on such questions, which prevailed in the Church.”



CHAPTER XIII.

Doctrinal Controversies—Academic Questions—Episcopal Questions—
 —Secessions to Rome—Dr. Pusey vs. Mr. Newman's Propositions—
 Apostasy and Unfaithfulness—Renouncing Latency and Ceremonies—The Way to Rome made easy—Indulgent Sentiments of
 the Romish Creed—Fervor and Superstitions of the Roman
 Church—Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception—Necessity of—
 Efficacy of the Sacrament dependent on the Priest—Invisible
 Effect of Romish Baptism—Language of Pope's Infallibility—its
 captivating Effect upon weak Minds—Rationalistic Animations
 —Timely Warning—The Theology of Germany—its ungodly
 Character—Denial of the Inspiration of the Bible—Language of
 Philosophical Heresy in a Scientific Age.

THE more deeply affecting the welfare of the Church, than even the ritual questions by which she was so miserably distracted, were the doctrinal controversies which, simultaneously with the strife about the externals of worship, disturbed her peace, and injured to the latter, in the eyes of the multitude, ever prone to judge by the outward appearance, an importance which did not really belong to them. In the first instance these controversies assumed the form of a vindication of the doctrine of the Church against the exaggerated and erroneous views propounded,—originally, it is but fair to suppose, without deliberation or ulterior design, but afterwards advisedly and with a set purpose,—in the "Tracts

for the Times." The censures pronounced, in various ways, by the academic authorities at Oxford, and by the University itself, upon the propositions of Tract XC., upon Dr. Pusey's sermon on the Holy Eucharist, and upon Mr. Ward's Ideal of a Christian Church,—the condemnation of Tractarian errors by Bishop Blomfield, and by several other Bishops to whose verdict on questions of doctrine the Church looked up with confidence, not only in their Visitation Charges, but, in some instances, by the exclusion of preachers chargeable with unsoundness from the pulpits of their dioceses,—and the decisive course adopted by the Bishop of London in the case of Mr. Oakeley, who formally set up a claim, while retaining his position as a clergyman of the English Church, to be permitted to hold Romish doctrines, provided he did not publicly teach them,—were so many acts of self-defence on the part of the Church against the insidious advances of Romish error within her pale. But not only did they answer their intended object,—that of arresting the progress of erroneous doctrines: they led to numerous secessions from the Church, on the part of individuals who, rather than renounce or reconsider the views which they had embraced, flung themselves into the arms of the Roman schism. The effect which these successive acts of apostasy, sufficiently distressing in themselves, produced upon the public mind, was considerably aggravated by avowals of long-continued secret unfaithfulness to the Church on the part of some of the seceders, and by the equivocal language in which their apostasy was spoken of by others who still retained positions of weight and influence within her pale. The most painful suspicions were necessarily excited, when Mr. Newman accounted for the emphatic protestations against Romish error made by himself in former years, by stating that they were not the result of his convictions at the time, but were put forth by him because "his position required it;" and when Dr. Pusey, his friend

and coadjutor, spoke of his apostasy as if it had been the act of the Great Head of the Church, who, in answer to the prayers offered in the Romish Churches and religious houses on the Continent, had seen fit to "transplant" into another part of the vineyard, more worthy of him than the Church of England, "a great instrument of God, fitted to carry out some great design for the restoration of the Church."

The wide-spread distrust which such occurrences and such language were calculated to engender, was not diminished by the fact that those who remained in outward communion with the Church of England, while their sympathies were too evidently with the Church of Rome, were assiduously employed in reproducing, for the use of members of the former, selections from the religious literature of the latter Church. This insidious proceeding did not escape the vigilance of Bishop Blomfield, who, in his Visitation Charge of 1846, shortly after the first of those gregarious desertions to the Church of Rome, which have since recurred at intervals, emphatically renewed the protest he had already recorded in his previous Charge, "against the publication, by clergymen of the English Church, of Devotions and Homilies, and Questions to be put to Penitents in Confession, and Hagiographies, composed by, or principally from, authors of the Church of Rome, and tainted with its errors. I know," the Bishop continued, "of no more probable method of unsettling ardent and sensitive minds, of perverting them from the simplicity of Scripture truth and worship, and of smoothing the way for their passing into the bosom of a corrupt and deceitful Church. I confess that I cannot understand how any person, professing to be a member of our own branch of the Church Catholic, can reconcile it to his conscience to be in any way accessory to proceedings, the effect of which upon the minds of those who are imperfectly instructed must be to diminish the seeming im-

portance of those fundamental differences which separate the Churches of England and Rome; to make them dissatisfied with the doctrine and discipline of the one, and to habituate them to regard with complacency, and in due time with affection, the worst errors of the other. I can understand this conduct on the part of one of that Society to whom it is permitted to disguise their real sentiments, and to assume any character which best enables them to propagate the errors of Rome; but I cannot comprehend the self-delusion by which any person, pursuing this course, can persuade himself that he is faithful to his solemn engagements as a clergyman of the English Church. I cannot but regard such a policy as more to be censured and feared, than open, honest, undisguised hostility. Deeply as I deplore the loss of those who, from being amongst our Church's ablest and most zealous defenders, have become her bitterest revilers and assailants, I would rather see a member of our communion pass over at once to the adversary's camp, and from thence hurl defiance and reproach against those whom he has deserted, than that he should continue amongst us only for the dishonest purpose (and such purpose has, in one instance at least, been openly avowed) of trying how much of the Romish system can be engrafted upon her own; in other words, how much of error can be engrafted upon truth; for this, and nothing less than this, if we hold in good faith the doctrine embodied in our Articles of Religion, we must believe to be the difference."

Again, in 1850, when the judgment pronounced by the Judicial Committee of Privy Council in the Gorham case had, to many weak minds, become the occasion, and by not a few dishonest minds had been made the pretext, for apostasy to Rome, Bishop Blomfield reiterated with much earnestness the expression of his belief, that for not a few of those lamentable secessions "the way had been paved by the growth of opinions and practices in

our own reformed Church, at variance, if not with the letter, yet with the spirit, of its teaching and ordinances. I am unwilling," he said, "to condemn, without reserve, the motives of those amongst the clergy, who have thought themselves at liberty to imitate, as nearly as it is possible to imitate without a positive infringement of the letter of the law, the forms and ceremonies of the Church of Rome; or to insinuate, without openly asserting, some of the most dangerous of those errors which our own reformed Church has renounced and condemned. I am bound to do justice to their zeal and devotedness, their self-denial and charity. Inconsistent as I think their conduct has been with their duty to the Church of which they are ministers, I cannot suspect them of intentional treachery. They may perhaps have thought that they were adopting the most likely method of retaining in our communion persons of warm imaginations and weak judgment, who were in danger of being dazzled by the meretricious splendour of the Roman ritual, or deluded by the false pretensions of the Roman system of doctrine to antiquity and unity. If such has been their object, they have been grievously disappointed. Concession to error can never really serve the cause of truth. If some few have been thus retained within the pale of our Church, many others have been gradually trained for secession from it. A taste has been excited in them for forms and observances, which has stimulated, without satisfying, their appetite, and they have naturally sought for its fuller gratification in the Church of Rome. They have been led, step by step, to the very edge of the precipice, and then, to the surprise and disappointment of their guides, have fallen over. I *know* that this happened in *some* instances. I have no doubt of its having happened in *many*.

"With respect to doctrine, what can be better calculated to lead the less learned, or less thoughtful members of our Protestant Church to look with complacency upon

the errors which that Church has renounced, and at length to embrace them, than to have books of devotion put into their hands by their own clergymen, in which all but Divine honour is ascribed to the Virgin Mary; a propitiatory virtue is attributed to the Eucharist; the mediation of the Saints is spoken of as a probable doctrine; prayer for the dead is urged as a positive duty; and a superstitious use of the sign of the cross is recommended as profitable? Add to this the secret practice of *auricular* confession, as a means of grace; the use of crucifixes and rosaries; the administration of what is termed the sacrament of penance; and it is manifest, that they who are taught to believe that such things are compatible with the principles of the English Church, must also believe it to be separated from that of Rome by a faint and almost imperceptible line, and be prepared to pass that line without much fear of incurring the guilt of schism."

In dealing with the graver causes alleged by those who at this period renounced their allegiance to the Church of England, and enrolled themselves under the banner of the Papal apostasy, Bishop Blomfield forcibly exposed the fallacy of representing the Church of Rome as a more faithful depository of Catholic truth than the Church of England. "Whoever," he observed, "desires to be in communion with the Church of Rome, must be prepared to embrace that system in all its fulness and complexity; every item of all the errors and superstitions which have at any time received the stamp of Papal infallibility; and not only so, but every *new* doctrine or practice which the same authority may from time to time impose upon the Church. It is not easy to say what the members of that Church are required to believe *now*; it is impossible for them to foresee what they may be called upon to admit as an article of the faith next year, or in any future year. For instance, till of late it was open to them to believe, or not, as they might see reason, the fanciful notion

of the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin, which had been opposed by some of the most eminent divines of their Church, and purposely left undecided by the Council of Trent. But the present Bishop of Rome has seen fit to make it an article of the faith; and no member of his Church can henceforth question it, without denying the infallibility of his spiritual sovereign, and so hazarding, as it is asserted, his own salvation.

“ Suppose that the teaching of our own Church, as to the effects of Baptism, were less clear and definite than it is, leaving to her ministers a greater latitude than is actually left to them by the recent judgment; would that justify any one of her members in throwing himself into the arms of a Church which teaches, and now more openly than ever insists upon, his paying Divine honours to a creature? Is Mariolatry a less sin, or less a departure from the truth, than a low view of baptismal regeneration? Is a belief that the grace of God is not tied to the outward and visible sign in a Sacrament, a more pernicious error than the assertion that the priest's intention is necessary to the efficacy of a Sacrament? If the former notion be calculated to raise a doubt whether this or that infant be made by Baptism a Christian, is not the other much more so? No man in the Church of Rome, who is bound to admit its doctrine respecting the priest's intention in administering the Sacraments, can be sure whether he is a Christian or not. This one dogma of that Church is more calculated to raise doubts and scruples in the minds of her members, than any uncertainty which is supposed to exist in any of the Articles of our reformed Church. This line of reasoning might be pursued at greater length with reference to the various corruptions of Gospel truth, the belief of which the Church of Rome binds upon the consciences of all her members as necessary to salvation. But I must content myself with the general observation, that he who deserts

the Church of his Baptism on account of some one supposed flaw in her system of discipline, or even of doctrine, and submits to an authority which demands an implicit belief in an indefinite number of dogmas, opposed alike to Scripture and to common sense, some impious and some absurd, may be compared to a man who, having observed some instance of doubt or hesitation in his guide, in order to avoid mistaking the path on one side, rushes blindfold over a precipice on the other."

Still more instructive, as a preservative against Popery, and as an illustration of the view which Bishop Blomfield took of the real causes of the extensive secessions to Rome, which it gave him so much pain to witness, is the following passage from his charge of 1846, on the subject of the Romish doctrine of infallibility:—"I am persuaded," he remarked, "that this, although it is really the most unreasonable and the least demonstrable of all the grounds upon which the Roman Church claims our allegiance, is that which is most successfully put forward by her agents, to ensnare tender consciences and to perplex weak understandings. The slavery of opinion is a natural consequence of the proneness of men's minds, in matters of high concernment and controverted certainty, to take up the conclusions of others, who are supposed to have greater advantages for the discovery of truth, and who are sufficiently positive in asserting that they have found it. There is no attribute which men would more gladly recognise in the teacher to whom they resort for instruction, than that of infallibility: and in proportion to the importance of the truths sought for, and to the supposed difficulty of ascertaining them, will be the readiness of ordinary minds to recognise the existence of that attribute in one who, possessing to a certain extent undoubted and legitimate authority, claims, in addition thereto, the prerogative which the Supreme Author and Source of truth has not seen fit to delegate to any mortal being, that

of finally and peremptorily deciding all controversy. Unstable and uninformed minds are most easily captivated by the promise of a conclusive settlement of all their doubts. They are too eager for the ease which that promise holds out to them, to scrutinize very narrowly the authority which pretends to give it. This is the leading feature of that strong delusion which takes so many captive, and consigns them to hopeless thralldom; the master spell which crowns, and gives potency to, 'the deceivableness of unrighteousness.' To be assured, by an infallible teacher, that he is the only legitimate interpreter of the mind of Jesus Christ, and of the laws of His Church; that if they believe whatever he commands them to believe, and practise all that he enjoins upon them, they will be saved,—is too comfortable a persuasion, not to be eagerly embraced by many who cannot so easily substantiate to their own minds all that is included in those grand, simple, fundamental truths of the Gospel, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,' and 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.'"

Grievous as were the advances of Romish heresy and Romanizing unsoundness, they did not constitute the only, nor the most serious danger with which the Church's faith was,—and, we fear we must add, still is,—threatened. Opinions which, in the first instance, had assumed the form of mere laxity of belief, claiming indulgence for individuals unable to see certain points in the precise and rigid aspect presented by the "scholastic definitions" of the orthodox formularies, had gradually, and without attracting much notice, insinuated themselves into at least one of the public schools, and into several of the Colleges at the two Universities. Reduced to their first principles, and consistently reasoned out, these opinions not only were sub-

versive of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, but struck at the very root of Revealed Truth. The inspiration of Holy Scripture, the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Atonement, the living Grace of the Sacraments, the Divine commission and spiritual powers of the Christian ministry, and, prospectively, the resurrection of the body, and the eternity of punishment, were the points in regard to which difficulties were suggested, and doubts insinuated, and, eventually, the right of the Church to "impose certain dogmas on men's minds," was formally impugned and openly denied. With the magnitude of the danger which menaced the Church from these opinions, Bishop Blomfield's mind was strongly impressed; and although they had not then been developed with the same degree of boldness with which they have since been avowed in more than one quarter, there were sufficient indications of the progress which they were making, to induce the Bishop, in his Visitation Charge of 1850, to call attention to them. "A natural principle of antagonism," he observed, "in the human mind makes it probable that some, who fly off from Popery, will traverse the entire diameter of the rational sphere, and be landed on the antipodes of infidelity. I would desire you to consider, whether some of those persons who are disgusted with the departures, now too common, from the soberness and simplicity of our devotional offices, and with the exaggerated notions which are insisted on as to the authority of the priestly office, are not too likely to take refuge, not in Low Church doctrine, as the term is commonly understood, but in the boundless expanse of latitudinarianism, a sea without a shore, and with no pole-star to guide those who embark on it, but the uncertain light of human reason. I cannot but think that we have more to apprehend from the theology of Germany than from that of Rome; from that which deifies human reason, than that which seeks

to blind or stifle it; from a school which labours to reconcile Christianity with its own philosophy, by stripping the Gospel of all its characteristic features, and reducing it to the level of a human system, than from a Church which rejects and condemns even the soundest conclusions of true philosophy, when they are at variance with the determinations of its own presumed infallibility.

“The theology, if it deserves the name, to which I allude, has been grafted upon, or grown out of, the idealism of the German philosophers. It has exhibited symptoms of decline in its native soil; but I fear it is beginning to lay hold on the more practical mind of this country: and from it, in my judgment, more danger is to be apprehended, than from the attempt to revive worn-out superstitions, and to shackle the understandings and consciences of men with fetters which were broken and thrown off at the Reformation. Moral evidence, historical testimony, inspiration, miracle, all that is objective in Christianity, is swept away by the writers of this school; its glory defaced, its living waters deprived of all their healing virtues by distillation in the alembic of rationalism.

“Now I fear there are some persons who think that they may safely go to a certain length with these bold adventurers in theology, without following them into *all* their extravagant speculations; for instance, that they may deny the inspiration of Holy Scripture, as the Church understands it, without calling in question the evidences, that is, the *historical* evidences, of Christianity; that they may believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and yet cast off what they term a superstitious reverence for the text (not the *letter*, but the substantive contents) of the Bible. But I do not believe it to be possible for any one thus to undervalue and weaken the authority of the

Apostles and Prophets, and so to undermine the foundations of his belief, without impairing the soundness of the superstructure, and diluting his faith in Jesus Christ as the chief corner-stone. To deny the inspiration of Scripture, is one step towards the rejection of the Gospel as a revelation from God. Against this fatal heresy I would earnestly caution my younger brethren, as being one from which, in the present state of the human mind, we have much more to fear than from the encroachments of Popery. Rationalism, as its name implies, referring everything to man's unaided reason, as the ultimate test of truth, flatters the pride of his nature, which is revolted by the humbling, though consolatory doctrines of the Gospel. Popery offends and disgusts the understanding, by inventions opposed alike to common sense and to the plain letter of Holy Scripture. The latter aims at the complete subjugation of the intellect to the authority of the self-constituted Vicar of Christ; the former asserts the supremacy and infallibility of human reason. It is manifest that *this* is the most likely to find favour with a learned and scientific generation; while the former can rest its hope of general acceptance only on the ground of general ignorance. The true safeguard and preservative from both extremes is to be found in the general diffusion of sound scriptural knowledge by means of education; in a sedulous inculcation of the doctrines of our Reformed Church, as drawn from the inspired Word of God; and in a firm adherence to her Creeds, and Liturgies, and Articles. If these be cast aside; or if, while they are subscribed to in the letter, they are understood and interpreted in a non-natural sense, so as to explain away, on one side, the fundamental truths of Christianity, or, on the other, the distinctive doctrines of our Church, we shall soon be afloat on a sea of error, drifting helplessly amongst the shoals and quicksands of heresy, old and

new. The Church will no longer be an ark of safety ; its ministry will be a ministry not of peace, but of confusion ; and what the results will be, we may learn from the example of the continental Churches, which are now reaping the bitter fruits of their defection from catholic truth and order, and of their separation of religious from secular education."





CHAPTER XXIV.

Practical Latitudinarianism of the English Mind—"The Broad Church"—Utilitarian Treatment of Religion—The Hampden Controversy—Appointment of Dr. Hampden to the See of Hereford—Declaration of the Bishops—Opposition to the Election and Confirmation of Dr. Hampden—Death of Archbishop Howley—Translation of Dr. Sumner to the Primacy—Consecration of Dr. Hampden—Virtual disavowal of his heretical Opinions—The Gorham Controversy—Refusal of Institution by the Bishop of Exeter—Appeal to the Judicial Committee of Privy Council—Bishop Blomfield's Dissent from the Judgment—Reasons of his Dissent—Real Heresy of Mr. Gorham—Doctrinal Character of the Liturgy—Effects of the Gorham Judgment—Its Importance overrated—The Papal Aggression—Its probable Causes—Its Important Bearings and Unimportant Results—Fresh Secessions to Rome—Lord John Russell and Popular Protestantism.

AS long as the rationalistic notions imported, by slow and imperceptible degrees, from the theology of Germany into that of the English Church were entertained merely as speculative theories, by minds of a particular stamp, they were comparatively harmless. They were of too alien a growth to strike deep root into the soil of the English Church, or to spread widely over its surface. It is in their alliance with the practical latitudinarianism arising from the changes which the political constitution of the country has undergone, that the real danger lies. Of the mischief of this alliance, of the spiritual desolation with which it menaces the Church, there is reason to apprehend that the first-fruits are only now beginning to ripen, in the rise of that new School

of Divinity to which the appellation of "the Broad Church" has been appropriately given, and the evident tendency of which is to lose sight alike of the historical origin and traditions of the Church, and of the high and heavenly destiny for which she has been called into existence by her Divine Founder, and to make religion, in the most convenient form to be given to it with that view, subservient to temporal and earthly purposes of social progress. But although the conflict which the Church will have to maintain against this tendency, belongs to a period of history subsequent to the age of Bishop Blomfield,—the period upon which the Church is about to enter, or, more correctly, perhaps, has but just entered,—so much so that his warnings on the subject may almost be considered prophetic, there were already, at the time when those warnings were given, indications sufficient to attract the notice of so attentive a watcher of the "signs of the times" as Bishop Blomfield, to the alliance likely to be formed between a latitudinarian State policy, and a theology equally latitudinarian on rationalistic principles.

The first incident of any note which pointed to probable danger in this direction was the appointment, already alluded to,* of Dr. Hampden to the Regius Professorship of Divinity in the University of Oxford. In 1832, Dr. Hampden had, as Bampton Lecturer, delivered a course of Lectures on Scholastic Philosophy in its relation to Christian Theology, in which opinions strongly militating against the established standards of orthodoxy were broached with a freedom, not to say licence, of language altogether unusual, as coming from the University pulpit. The then position of the Lecturer in the University was not sufficiently important to call for any official notice of the strange sentiments propounded by him; nor did a pamphlet published by him two years later, in support of

* pp. 203, 204.

the measures then in agitation for the admission of Dissenters to the two Universities, excite more attention than is usually given to topics of polemical discussion. But when, in 1836, Lord Melbourne forced upon the University the impugner of her standards of orthodoxy, and assailant of her Church character, as one of her Professors of Divinity, silent acquiescence was felt to be impossible; and remonstrance having proved fruitless, the University guarded her character and the integrity of her teaching by declaring, in a formal vote of Convocation, that the new Professor "had, in his writings, so treated matters theological, that in this respect the University had no confidence in him," and accordingly repudiating his testimonial as a test of theological attainment, or of soundness in the faith. Thus matters remained, until on the avoidance of the See of Hereford by the translation of Dr. Musgrave to the Primacy of York, after the death of Archbishop Harcourt, Lord John Russell, the champion of "civil and religious liberty," and the strenuous advocate of the Dissenting interest, resolved to fill the vacant See by the elevation of Dr. Hampden to the Episcopal Bench. So flagrant was the outrage on the Church, involved in this appointment, felt to be, that the first rumour of its being in contemplation was met by a general ery of indignation. The Bishops took counsel together, and a formal remonstrance against the appointment, headed by Bishop Blomfield,—Archbishop Howley feeling himself precluded by his position as Metropolitan from taking part in the measure,—was addressed to the Prime Minister by a majority of the Bishops, including, with the exception of Bishops Sumner of Chester, Copleston of Llandaff, and Lonsdale of Liehfield, all the members of the Episcopal Bench who did not owe their preferment to the Whigs. "We consider ourselves," said the protesting Bishops in this remarkable document, "to be acting only in the discharge of our bounden duty both to the Crown and to

the Church, when we respectfully but earnestly express to your Lordship our conviction that if this appointment be completed, there is the greatest danger both of the interruption of the peace of the Church, and of the disturbance of the confidence which it is most desirable that the clergy and laity of the Church should feel in every exercise of the Royal Supremacy, especially as regards that very delicate and important particular, the nomination to vacant Sees." The "peace of the Church" was not, however, the primary object which Lord John Russell had at heart; the appointment was persevered in, and carried, though not without difficulty, through its several stages, every one of which was marked by proceedings of a character so unusual that Doctors' Commons was all a-stir in search of precedents. The election passed against the dissentient votes of the Dean and one Canon; at the confirmation a petition to be heard in opposition to the election, tendered by Presbyters of the Diocese, had to be set aside by the arbitrary *dictum* of the Archbishop's Commissioners, who ruled that the call for objectors to appear, which forms part of the ceremony, was an unmeaning formality,—a decision repugnant to common sense, and which narrowly escaped reversal by the Court of Queen's Bench, the Judges being equally divided in opinion on the point; lastly, the act of consecration was preceded by the presentation to the Archbishop of a protest signed by upwards of 1600 clergymen, the effect of which was sought to be neutralized by a counter-memorial with nearly the same number of clerical signatures from the supporters of the Bishop elect. Of the protesting Bishops some expressly declared, and of the rest it was to be assumed, that they would have no hand in the consecration; and the difficulty which, on this score, it was believed, Archbishop Howley himself would have felt, was solved by the hand of death, by which he was removed from the scene of strife within a few days after the Court of Queen's Bench had allowed

the right of the Church to show cause against the consecration of a person deemed unfit for the Episcopal office, to become inoperative by the technical effect of an equal division of opinion upon the Bench. As in the then posture of affairs the acceptance of the Primacy at the hands of Lord John Russell amounted to a virtual engagement to consecrate Dr. Hampden, his successor could feel no difficulty; and the consecration took place, accordingly, on the 26th of March, 1848, Bishops Copleston of Llandaff, Pepys of Worcester, and Stanley of Norwich, assisting the new Archbishop; and Dr. Hinds, afterwards Dr. Stanley's successor in the See of Norwich, preaching the Consecration Sermon.

But although Dr. Hampden was thus placed in the Episcopal throne of Hereford, the opinions which had provoked so much opposition, were not enthroned with him. He did not, it is true, offer to the Church the peace-offering of a formal retraction; but he disclaimed with great earnestness the sentiments imputed to him on the ground of his writings, and affirmed, in the strongest language—the sincerity of which he has given the Church no subsequent cause to question,—his attachment to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England. And although he was, at the time of his elevation to the Episcopate, lying under an academic censure for heterodoxy, which the University had but recently refused to remove, he obtained from no less than sixteen Heads of Houses a formal testimonial in which they declared that “having for several years enjoyed ample opportunities of learning the tenor of his public teaching, and hearing his discourses from the pulpit of the University, they were not only satisfied that his religious belief was sound, but looked forward with confidence to his endeavours to preach the Gospel of Christ in its integrity.” In the face of these declarations the elevation of the preacher of the Bampton Lectures of 1832 can certainly not be regarded in the light of a victory

gained for the opinions incautiously, in a great measure perhaps inadvertently, propounded by him fifteen years before from the pulpit of St. Mary's.

Not very dissimilar was the conclusion arrived at by Bishop Blomfield himself as to the practical result of another attack upon the faith,—not less disquieting, at the time, to men's minds and consciences,—in which political latitudinarianism made common cause with theological laxity of belief, and against which, likewise, it fell to Bishop Blomfield's lot to aid in defending the Church. The occasion for it was furnished by the Rev. G. C. Gorham, a clergyman of the diocese of Exeter, who, having by an ostentatious display of latitudinarian sentiments attracted the notice of his Bishop, the staunchest and most fearless Churchman on the Bench, was by him refused institution on his being presented by the Lord Chancellor to another benefice in the same diocese, despite of the Bishop's having declined, on the ground of his suspected unsoundness, to countersign his testimonials. To protect his diocese and his office against this disregard of Episcopal authority in the exercise of the Lord Chancellor's patronage, Bishop Phillpotts had recourse to his right of examining the presentee; and having, as he had anticipated, found his opinions to be heterodox on the important subject of baptismal regeneration, the Bishop, in a formal judicial sentence, refused to institute him, assigning, as the reason of such refusal, his unsoundness in the faith. This strong assertion of Episcopal jurisdiction in matters of doctrine being viewed in the light of an encroachment upon the rights of the Crown and its Chancellor in regard to ecclesiastical patronage, an application to compel the Bishop to institute was made to the Court of Arches. That Court, however, confirmed the Bishop's sentence as to Mr. Gorham's heterodoxy, and upheld the Bishop in his refusal. The case was, then,

carried by appeal before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which had been constituted the Supreme Court of Appeal in causes ecclesiastical—including, by an oversight, as was afterwards avowed, cases of doctrine—by a statute passed in the year 1832. It was only now that attention was directed to the manifest impropriety of subjecting questions of theology to the adjudication of a lay tribunal;—an impropriety which was but indifferently remedied by calling in some of those who, by the law of God and of the Church, are the proper judges of doctrine, in the capacity of assessors. It was in this capacity that Bishop Blomfield was, together with the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, made a party to the proceedings on the question of baptismal regeneration before the Judicial Committee of Privy Council. In the responsibility of the judgment pronounced by that tribunal, however, Bishop Blomfield had no share. On the delivery of the judgment it was expressly stated that while one of the Judges—Vice-Chancellor, now Lord Justice, Knight Bruce—dissented from it, two only of the Episcopal Assessors, the two Archbishops, concurred; and the third, the Bishop of London, likewise dissented.

The grounds of his dissent the Bishop himself explained in his Visitation Charge, delivered in the autumn of the same year (1850) in which the judgment of the Judicial Committee of Privy Council had been pronounced. In doing so, he carefully guarded himself against the supposition that his dissent was founded on a desire to enforce with extreme rigidity the Church's standard of doctrine; on the contrary, he declared his antecedent willingness to have given to Mr. Gorham the full benefit of "that latitude which has been allowed, or tolerated, ever since the Reformation. I could," he said, "have acquiesced in a judgment which, while it recognized that latitude, should have distinctly asserted the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, in the proper sense of the words, to be the

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doctrine of our Church." His objection to the judgment the Bishop stated to be this, that Mr. Gorham's errors, of which the judgment gave but a very inadequate version, were "not merely of *doubtful* tendency with reference to the Church's doctrine, but precisely and dogmatically *opposed* to that doctrine. According to Mr. Gorham," the Bishop went on to say, after referring at some length to the doctrine of "prevenient grace," propounded by Mr. Gorham in the course of his examination, "the strengthening and confirming of faith is the whole of the spiritual grace bestowed in Baptism, even on worthy recipients; faith, forgiveness of sins, regeneration, the new nature, and adoption into the family of God, have been all bestowed upon such, if at all, *before* Baptism. It did not appear to me possible to reconcile such statements as these with the plain and unequivocal teaching of the Church of England as to the nature of a Sacrament. They seemed to me to be a plain denial of that which the Church asserts, that an infant is made *in* and *by* Baptism (not *before* nor *after* it) a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. If there be any meaning in words, these statements are an express contradiction of the truth that in a Sacrament the outward and visible part, or sign, is a means *whereby* we receive the inward and spiritual grace, as well as a pledge to assure us thereof. If this theory of Mr. Gorham's be true, then is baptism no longer a Sacrament according to the Church's definition, nor can we, with a safe conscience, continue to teach our children that Catechism which yet the Church declares is to be learned of every one of her members. It appeared to me, then, that these assertions of Mr. Gorham, which were passed over without notice by the Judicial Committee, but to which I could not shut my eyes, went to deprive holy Baptism of its sacramental character, and utterly to evacuate its peculiar and distinctive grace."

Incidentally Bishop Blomfield was led to notice the

assertion advanced by Mr. Gorham's counsel, and since reproduced upon another important occasion, "that the Book of Common Prayer is to be considered simply as a guide to devotion, not as defining any doctrine." In reply to this the Bishop observed: "It appears to me to be a perfectly inadmissible supposition, that in a solemn act of worship, and especially in the celebration of a Sacrament, any point of doctrine should be embodied as a certain and acknowledged truth, about which the Church entertains any doubt. This would surely be nothing short of addressing the Author of truth in the language of falsehood. On the contrary, the assumption of a doctrine, as true, in a prescribed form of prayer or thanksgiving to God, is, in fact, the most solemn and positive assertion of that doctrine which can possibly be made. Will any one maintain that, if the Articles of Religion had contained no direct declaration of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, it would not have been expressly and most solemnly asserted by the Church when she directed her members to pray to the 'Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, three persons and one God?' or that, because the special work of the Holy Ghost in the economy of man's salvation, that of renewing him in the inner man, is not in terms asserted in the Articles, it is therefore not asserted by the Church, when she instructs us to pray, 'that being regenerate, and made the children of God by adoption and grace, we may be daily renewed by His Holy Spirit?' I do not understand how any clergyman can doubt whether the Liturgy is binding upon him in respect of doctrine, when he remembers the solemn declaration which he has made in the face of the Church—'I do hereby declare my unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the book entitled The Book of Common Prayer.' Not only, you will observe, *his consent to use it*, but *his assent to everything contained in it*. Again, it is prescribed by the Act of Uniformity, that every lec-

turer shall openly declare his 'assent unto, and *approbation* of the said book (of Common Prayer); and to the use of the prayers, &c., therein contained and prescribed,'—words which are quite incompatible with the notion, that nothing more is required of the clergy than to declare their readiness to *use* the Book of Common Prayer." And in further confirmation of this view, the Bishop referred to the 57th canon, as containing "a direct assertion that the Baptismal and Eucharistic Offices are *dogmatic* as well as *devotional*: and," he added, "were this authoritative declaration wanting, we should protest against the notion, that in the most solemn act of prayer and thanksgiving to God, our Church should have permitted herself to employ the strongest and most unqualified words, without intending them to be understood in their natural sense. I need not consider the comparative authority of the Articles and the Book of Common Prayer in questions of doctrine. We are bound to admit the truth of *both* documents. If there be anything which wears the semblance of contradiction, or diversity, between the two, we may be sure that the framers of the Articles did not intend it; and, with respect to the two Sacraments, the express declaration of the Canons, put forth fifty years after the publication of the Articles, is decisive as to the point, that they are to be interpreted in accordance with the plain language of the Offices in the Book of Common Prayer. If there be any ambiguity, or want of precision, in the Articles, as to the effect of Baptism, it is, I think, our obvious duty to have recourse to the Office for the administration of that Sacrament, in order to ascertain the Church's mind on so important a point of doctrine."

Notwithstanding these strong reasons for dissenting from the judgment of the Judicial Committee of Privy Council, Bishop Blomfield was not disposed to attach much weight to the fact that an adverse decision had been pronounced; first, because he considered that the *errors* of Mr. Gorham

- were not "sanctioned," but simply "overlooked" by the judgment; and, in the next place, because it was not the act of the Church. "It does not," he remarked, "alter a single sentence or word of her creeds or formularies; it does not exempt any one of her ministers from the necessity of subscribing to her Articles in their 'plain, literal, and grammatical sense,' nor give them liberty to change or omit a single word of those offices in which her orthodox doctrines are embodied, and enunciated, and applied to practice. This is, indeed, an invaluable advantage possessed by the Church in her Book of Common Prayer, that it is a standing confutation of erroneous doctrine, a stated proclamation of Christian truth continually resounding in the ears, and carried home to the hearts, of all her members, and made familiar even to the most unlearned. As long as we retain unaltered our Book of Common Prayer, I do not think that we have much to fear from the diversity of opinions which may from time to time arise in the Church. A clergyman may sometimes preach strange doctrines to his people; but he must also formally contradict them as often as he reads the Liturgy in his church; and the people in general are so habituated to its plain, simple, forcible enunciations of Scripture verities, in the most affecting form, that of direct addresses to the Author of all truth, that an occasional misinterpretation of them, on the part of the preacher, will not often loosen the foundations of their faith, nor rob them of the consolation which the Church's offices are so well adapted to impart." And, further on, he observed: "The highest judicial tribunal has no authority to alter one word of the formularies in which the Church has deliberately enshrined her belief. That can only be done by the Church herself, duly represented in Convocation."

Whatever might be, on abstract grounds of logical argument, the force of the remarks as to the actual bearings

and effect of the judgment, by which Bishop Blomfield thus endeavoured to allay the excitement which the decision pronounced by the Judicial Committee of Privy Council in the Gorham case had created, the moment was unhappily not favourable to the calm and dispassionate consideration of such questions. The religious feelings of Churchmen had been stirred to their very depth by the recent controversies; and fresh fuel had just been added to the flame by that singular and unexpected act of daring, the division of England by a Papal Brief into a number of dioceses, to be governed by a territorial hierarchy;—an act which amounted in fact to a direct assertion of the Ecclesiastical Supremacy of the Pope within this realm. That the adoption of this bold step was suggested to the Court of Rome by the religious state of England at that juncture, cannot reasonably be doubted. But whether it was simply the result of a miscalculation on the part of Dr. Wiseman, and other ecclesiastics of the Romish Church, who over-rated the extent to which a spirit of disaffection had gained ground among the members of the English Church, or whether it was urged upon them, and through them upon the Court of Rome, by those who had committed, and, possibly, by others who meditated, apostasy from the Church of England to that of Rome, will, in all likelihood, never be known. The latter supposition is rendered not improbable by the fact that the virtual denial, involved in recent proceedings, of the right of the Church to a voice in the appointment of her Bishops, and of her spiritual authority in the decision of controversies of faith, had unbinged many minds, and shaken their allegiance to the Church of England; and that many of those who felt most deeply on these points, continued to hold correspondence, and even to maintain personal intercourse, with those of their former friends and associates who had gone over to the Romish Communion. Strong expressions of disgust at their

position, made use of in the familiarity of private communication by disaffected and wavering members of the English Church, and exaggerated statements as to the extent to which the clergy generally, as well as many of the laity, were supposed to sympathise with them, would naturally produce in the minds of the perverts from the English Church an impression, which they would communicate to the Heads of the Papal Church, that all that was wanted to insure wholesale defection to the Church of Rome, was the assumption by the latter of a commanding attitude. This would sufficiently account for the otherwise inexplicable phenomenon that the authorities of the Romish Church were led to imagine that the moment had arrived for the Papacy to put forward in England those claims which it never had renounced, to universal Ecclesiastical Supremacy. Their impression evidently was that the prostration of the legitimate authority of the English Church, in the face of an unconstitutional and odious exercise of the Supremacy of the Crown, wielded by a Minister who was the life-long and bitter opponent of all that was catholic in the Church of England, had paved the way for the successful establishment of the Papal usurpation on the ruins of the spiritual edifice of the Reformed Church of England.

But whether the impressions which gave rise to the Papal aggression originated with the Heads of the Romish Church themselves, or with apostates from, and Romanizers within, the English Church, the result clearly proved that they were mistaken in their calculations. Of this Bishop Blomfield appears from the first to have been well convinced. He felt no alarm, although he was by no means disposed to underrate the significance of the act of aggression the commission of which preceded but by a few weeks the delivery of his Visitation Charge in 1850. Speaking of the duty of "abstaining from everything which might seem in any way to countenance the errors

of the Church of Rome." He observed that the Pope "pretended upon the Council with excessive pride at the present time, when," he said, "the Church is maintaining its pretensions to universal dominion, though he will a degree of arrogant inferiority acknowledge. It is not worth thought sufficient," he continued, "to all future times, since the time of the Reformation, to provide for the spiritual care of their subjects in this country by the appointment of Vicars Apostolic, exercising indirect episcopal authority over them, yet not as Bishops of any English See, but deriving their titles from some imaginary dioceses, in various regions. The assertion, now first made, of the Pope's right to erect Bishops' Sees in this country, appears to me to be not only an intentional insult to the conscience and dignity of England, but a daring, though powerful, invasion of the supremacy of the Crown. The Act of Parliament which restored that supremacy provides, that 'No foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate, spiritual or temporal, shall use, enjoy, or exercise, any manner of power, jurisdiction, superiority, authority, pre-eminence, or privilege, spiritual or ecclesiastical, within this realm.' And although, while the law in this respect remains unchanged, the pretended erection of a Bishop's See in England, by the Pope's authority, can have no legal effect, it is manifestly the assertion, on his part, of a right to do that which the laws of England have forbidden; and I cannot, therefore, but regard it as a measure against which, not only the Church, but the Government of this country, is bound emphatically to protest."

Similar was the Bishop's language in the replies which he made to the various addresses and memorials presented to him on the subject, and more especially to the memorial of the Archdeacons and Canons, and a large body of the Clergy, of Westminster. "The recent assumption," he said, "of authority by the Bishop of Rome, in pretending

to parcel out this country into new dioceses, and to appoint Archbishops and Bishops to preside over them, without the consent of the Sovereign, is a schismatical act, without precedent, and one which would not be tolerated by the Government of any Roman Catholic Kingdom. I trust that it will not be quietly submitted to by our own." And, after referring to the difference between the position of the Vicars Apostolic, formerly sent to supervise the English Roman Catholics, and the territorial Episcopate now established, he went on to say: "The appointment of Bishops to preside over new dioceses in England, constituted by a Papal Brief, is virtually a denial of the legitimate authority of the British Sovereign and of the English Episcopate; a denial, also, of the validity of our orders, and an assertion of spiritual jurisdiction over the whole Christian people of this realm."

In proof that this was the meaning attached by the Romanists themselves to the step recently taken by the Court of Rome, the Bishop quoted their own comments upon the subject, in some of which it was stated in so many words that by this act "all baptized persons" within the newly created dioceses were "openly commanded to submit themselves" to the Pastors set over them by the Pope "in all ecclesiastical matters, under pain of damnation;" and it was made a boast that "the Anglican Sees, those ghosts of realities long passed away," were "utterly ignored." As to the effect which so insolent a proceeding was likely to produce, the Bishop observed: "After all, I am much inclined to believe that in having recourse to the extreme measure which has called forth your address, the Court of Rome has been ill-advised, as regards the extension of its influence in this country, and that it has taken a false step. That step will, I am convinced, tend to strengthen the Protestant feeling of the people at large, and will cause some persons to hesitate and draw back, who are disposed to make concessions to Rome, under a mistaken

impression that she has abated somewhat of her ancient pretensions, and that a union of the two Churches might possibly be effected without the sacrifice of any fundamental principle. Hardly anything could more effectually dispel that illusion than the recent proceedings of the Roman Pontiff. He virtually condemns and excommunicates the whole English Church, Sovereign, Bishops, Clergy, and laity, and shuts the door against every scheme of comprehension save that which should take for its basis an entire and unconditional submission to the spiritual authority of the Bishop of Rome." And in his Visitation Charge he thus recorded his opinion that the expectations which had led to the aggression would not be realized. "It is evident," he remarked, "that the Bishop and Court of Rome entertain very sanguine hopes of the conversion of this country, which they consider to be *in partibus infidelium*, and of its return to the bosom of their Church. The sad falling away of some, who seemed to be the most attached to the Church of England, has awakened expectations, not unnatural indeed, but destined to certain disappointment. I believe that the very boldness of the pretensions now put forth by the Bishop of Rome and his agents, will prevent their success. They may dazzle and confound a few weak minds, or captivate some ardent imaginations; but they will be instinctively repelled by the common sense and right feeling of the people at large. Popery, as demanding an entire prostration of man's intellect before an authority which attempts to substantiate its claims, not by proofs, but by gratuitous and inconsistent assertions, cannot long retain its hold upon the mind of a well-educated people, imbued with a knowledge of Holy Scripture."

The correctness of these prognostications was verified by the event. The autumn of the year 1850, and the spring of the following year, witnessed another gregarious secession movement, in the course of which several laymen

of rank and distinction, and a number of clergymen, went over to Rome. Among the latter was Archdeacon Manning, the highest prize which the Romish Church had up to that time, and, if we except the subsequent perversion of Archdeacon Wilberforce, has to this day, carried off from the ranks of the Church of England. The great bulk of the clergy and laity, however, remained faithful to their spiritual mother; and had it not been for the political influence which, in the almost evenly balanced state of parties, the Popish representatives, returned by Irish constituencies under the control of the Popish priesthood, were enabled to exercise in Parliament, the Papal aggression would have resolved itself into a palpable absurdity, and would have covered its originators with ridicule. The loud professions, indeed, of the manifesto issued by Lord John Russell on the first intelligence of that "insolent and insidious" act, in the shape of a letter to Bishop Maltby, vanished into thin air in the face of the Papal band in the House of Commons; and the enactment introduced in the following year for the professed purpose of preventing the assumption of illegal titles, derived from the Pope's pretended supremacy, was so inefficiently framed as to render it altogether nugatory. But while the Government and the Legislature, ignominiously succumbing to the dictation of a compact band of Papists, failed to vindicate the independence of the Kingdom and the supremacy of the Crown, and while the excitement of popular Protestantism evaporated in noisy clamour, the Papal aggression was, through the Divine goodness, turned into the means of rendering to the Church of England a signal service, by the restoration of her synodal action.





CHAPTER XXV.

The Convocation Movement—Its Early History—Church Unions—Tractarian Difficulties—Declaration of Attachment to the English Church—Church Action on Church Principles—"Society for the Revival of Convocation"—Bishop Blomfield on Convocation—Meeting at the Freemasons' Hall—Petition to Convocation against the Papal Aggression—Convocation Debate in the House of Lords—Supreme Authority of the Episcopate on Questions of Doctrine—Growing Difficulties of the Church—Synodal Action the True Remedy—Inadequate Representation of the Parochial Clergy in Convocation—Admission of the Laity to Convocation—Petitions to Convocation for the Resumption of its Constitutional Functions—Dr. Howley's Views on the Convocation Question—Appointment of Committees of Convocation—Address to the Crown for the Royal Licence—Sir George Grey's Curt Reply—Close of Bishop Blomfield's Public Career—Attack of Paralysis—Resignation of his See—Farewell Address from the Clergy of the Diocese.

FOR some time past the restoration of the synodal action of the Church had presented itself to thoughtful and observant minds as the true means of solving the difficulties, and guarding against the dangers, which were gathering around her on all sides, and with daily increasing force. The last Convocation of the Province of Canterbury, assembled under the Primacy of Archbishop Howley,—which met, according to constitutional precedent, and as a matter of form, simultaneously with the new Parliament in November 1847,—had taken the unprecedented step of embodying in its customary address to the Crown, an "earnest prayer," that

it might be "Her Majesty's pleasure to require the advice of the Synod in devising means for increasing the efficiency of the Church." The presentation of this address, however, had, in consequence of the illness and death of the Archbishop, been delayed till the month of June in the following year; and although no change was made in the wording of the address, the prayer in question,—to the object of which the views of Dr. Howley's successor in the Primacy were known to be unfavourable,—was passed over in silence in the reply from the throne. But that prayer had been but the feeble echo of strong convictions which had grown up in the minds of many earnest and devoted members of the Church, both among the clergy and laity. The discussions which arose out of the appointment of Dr. Hampden to the see of Hereford, not only strengthened those convictions, but caused inquiry to be made into the constitutional position of the Church, and into the powers—formerly exercised, and never abrogated, though suffered to lie dormant for nearly a century and a half—of her Synods or Convocations. The resuscitation of these powers found its place among the questions taken up by associations formed, under the name of Church Unions, in different parts of the country, as well as in the metropolis, for the purpose of watching over the interests of the Church, and promoting measures for her defence and her increased efficiency. Early in the year 1850, addresses on the subject, numerous signed, were presented to the Queen and to the two Primate. Still there was but a remote prospect of a practical attainment of the object of those addresses. Partly this was owing to the personal opinions of the two Archbishops, who concurred with the political Government in deprecating the revival of synodal deliberations; the former dreading them chiefly with reference to the existing divisions within the Church, the latter regarding them with apprehension, on account of the obstruction which they felt that the action of so

important a body as the representative assembly of the Church of England, was likely to throw in the way of their plans of secularization. Independently, however, of the discouragement to which it was exposed in high quarters, the demand for the revival of the action of Convocation was seriously impeded by the suspicions generally entertained against all advocates of Church principles, in consequence of the Romanizing character which the Tractarian movement had assumed, and by the mutual distrust engendered by the same cause within the Church Unions themselves. The Papal aggression, and, as its natural result, the increased boldness of the Romanizers, brought matters to a crisis. The attempt, repeatedly made but always frustrated, to obtain united Church action on the basis of definite and avowed principles of loyalty to the English Church, and of uncompromising resistance to Popish as well as to rationalistic tendencies, proved at length successful; and the attention and the energy of Churchmen were concentrated upon measures for the revival of synodal action. In the hope that thereby the Church of England might be enabled, both to resist attacks from without, and to recover from the state of internal weakness and discord into which she had lapsed, a distinct association was formed exclusively for this object, under the name of the "Society for the Revival of Convocation."

That to these various movements of self-constituted bodies one placed in the position of Bishop Blomfield could not give his direct sanction or official countenance, is obvious. But although he felt himself precluded from general participation in, or express approval of, their proceedings, he gave them, indirectly, all the encouragement in his power by receiving with ready kindness such communications from them as could with propriety be addressed to him; and in any steps taken by them, which assumed a regular and constitutional form, he hesitated not to accord to them his efficient co-operation. In reference to the

revival of the synodal functions of the Church he was one of the first Bishops who expressed a decidedly favourable opinion. "In theory," he observed, in his Charge of 1850, "and by her legal constitution, the Church possesses the right of deliberating in her collective capacity upon questions of doctrine or discipline; but, in practice, she is restrained from exercising it. That restraint is no sufficient ground for renouncing her communion; but it may well be thought a fit subject of complaint; and its removal may be sought for by all legitimate methods. It may be doubted whether the actual constitution of Convocation is the best that could be devised; it may be questioned whether the Church should not be represented by a body consisting of lay as well as clerical members; but even as Convocation at present exists, some matters might safely be entrusted to its consideration; nor should it be forgotten that the Crown can at any moment interfere to stop its proceedings, if they should transgress the rules of equity or of charity."

It is not a little remarkable that for the first practical step towards the attainment of the object to which Bishop Blomfield had thus given the sanction of his high authority, the Church of England is indebted to the Papal aggression. While in the winter of 1850-51 the town was ringing with the most incongruous Anti-papery cries and demonstrations,—men of all creeds uniting with men of no creed; the Jew being hailed on a Christian platform in the character of a "fellow Protestant;" and protests, the efficiency of which was measured by the strength of their language, being directed as often against the Catholic principles of the Church as against Romish error and Romanizing unsoundness,—the promoters of the movement for the revival of Convocation convened a public meeting in the metropolis, "for the purpose of adopting addresses to Her Majesty and the two Houses of Convo-

cation, on the subject of the recent Papal aggression, praying for the restoration of the synodal functions of the Church, as the most 'legitimate and effectual means of opposing all encroachments from without, and vindicating the doctrine of the Reformed Catholic Church against error of every kind." The announcement of an intention to address petitions to Convocation—a proceeding unheard of for at least one hundred and thirty years—caused no small sensation. The meeting,—which took place at the Freemasons' Hall, on the 14th of January, 1851, and was presided over by Mr. Henry Hoare,—was numerous attended by persons of the most opposite sentiments; and after a stormy discussion a large majority voted in support of a resolution affirming that "the recent daring aggression of the Pope was to be attributed in a great measure to the crippled state of the Church of England—the direct consequence of the long-continued suppression of her synodal functions; that the Church of England could deal with this aggression only in her corporate capacity, in her national Synod; and that, therefore, the present emergency constituted an additional plea for urging the revival of her synodal functions." Addresses to the Queen, and petitions to the two Convocations of Canterbury and York, were likewise adopted, and the petition to the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury was placed for presentation in the hands of the Bishop of London, who readily took charge of it, though an attack of illness compelled him to depute the Bishop of Chichester to present it on his behalf.

The result was highly satisfactory. Whereas formerly Convocation had never met at all, after its first assembling at the opening of a new Parliament for the purpose of voting a formal address to the Crown, but had been prorogued from time to time by the officials, until its extinction by a dissolution of Parliament,—the 5th of February, 1851, the day to which Convocation stood pro-

rogued, exhibited the spectacle, unprecedented for more than a century, of the Primate of all England, attended by the Vicar-General of the Province, and other ecclesiastical officers, repairing in state to the Jerusalem Chamber, to meet the Bishops and Clergy of his Province in Synod assembled, for the purpose of exercising some of those constitutional functions which had so long been in abeyance. The competency of Convocation to receive petitions had, indeed, been disputed ; but due notice of the intended presentation of a petition having been given to the Archbishop, a search had been made into ancient precedents, and the right of Churchmen to petition the Synod, and by consequence the competency, nay the duty, of the Synod to receive the petitions of the Clergy and laity, had been clearly ascertained. In order to obtain a Parliamentary recognition of the fact that Convocation had thus resumed the exercise of some of its long dormant functions, a motion was made in the House of Lords towards the end of the session by Lord Redesdale, for a copy of the petition presented to Convocation in February ; and in the course of the debate to which this motion gave rise the Bishop of London not only recorded his decided opinion in favour of the resumption of the constitutional action of Convocation, but laid down two important principles, on the adoption of which, sooner or later, the practical efficiency of the Church's synodal action will depend,—the principle of claiming for the Episcopate supreme authority in the decision of all questions of doctrine,—and the principle of admitting the laity to a share in the deliberations of the Synod on matters of external government and administration. In reference to the latter point the Bishop, on behalf of the great body of the Clergy, emphatically disclaimed any intention—such as had been imputed to them by the opponents of synodal action—to exclude the laity from all participation in the decision of external matters relating to the Church. On the former

point he referred to what he had already stated in a former debate, on the occasion of a Bill which he had introduced in the previous year, but had been unable to carry through, for the establishment of a more satisfactory Court of final Appeal in questions of doctrine than the Judicial Committee of Privy Council, on which this jurisdiction had, by an oversight of the Legislature, been conferred. What he had then broadly asserted, the Bishop now reiterated—"that in the determination of points of doctrine it always had been the practice of the Christian Church to entrust this decision to the Bishops of the Church in their judicial character, or at the very least to give them a veto upon the decisions of other bodies. In the Episcopal Church of America," the Bishop continued, "which we may fairly term the daughter, or at least the sister, of the Church of England, questions of faith and doctrine may be discussed by the representative body of that Church, but no decision can be come to without first allowing a veto to the Bishops. I am, therefore, prepared to assert, for the Order to which I belong, the right of determining judicially for our own Church on all points of faith."

On the general question of the expediency of the revival of the functions which the constitution delegated to the Synod for the government of the Church, and with special reference to the objections which had been urged against it by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop observed: "No one can be more sensible than I am, of the great difficulties which attend this question. I feel the full force of the objections which have been urged. I feel all the difficulties of the case. But I must say, they are trifling compared with those difficulties in which the Church must be involved, unless your Lordships are prepared to take measures to restore to her her inherent right of deliberation. With respect to the disputes which took place in Convocation during the earlier part of the

last century, I think it will be found, if your Lordships will read the history of those times, that the reasons which caused the suppression of Convocation, were not that the Clergy were too violent in their disputes on religious questions, but that the Lower House of Convocation took notice of the heretical teaching of one of the Bishops who had recently been appointed; and that it was political and not religious motives that induced the Minister of the Crown of that day to suppress the Convocation. But if we are to argue from the abuse of an institution against the institution itself, I know of none, not even that instituted by the Saviour Himself, against which that same argument may not be used, to prevent the exercise of its legitimate and inherent powers. If the Church is not qualified so to deliberate on its own affairs, I should like to know what organised body is. That Parliament, as it is now constituted, is qualified to deliberate on the affairs of the Church, is a proposition to which I cannot accede. At the same time I must state that I am not satisfied with the present constitution of Convocation; and for this reason, that,—putting aside the question as to the admission of the laity,—I do not think that the parochial clergy are adequately represented, while the Deans and Chapters are more than adequately represented in Convocation. Since the last meetings of Convocation the Clergy have greatly increased in numbers, and still more in learning, in intelligence, and in independence; and I do not think that about forty representatives in Convocation is an adequate representation of fifteen or sixteen thousand of the parochial Clergy. But if alterations are to be made, I think that Convocation itself is the body which ought in the first instance to make these alterations.”

The Bishop next proceeded to argue that even as Convocation was at present constituted, great advantages might be derived from its deliberations, whilst any possible inconveniences could easily be obviated by the exercise

of the Royal prerogative in putting a stop to its proceedings; and "upon the whole," he said, "I cannot but come to the conclusion that great as the difficulties are, the growing difficulties that embarrass the Church for want of such a representation, are still greater. Recent events have made me individually feel strongly the want of such a body. I do not know to whom to have recourse for counsel and advice; and I am satisfied that unless some representative body, combining all classes of the Church, is permitted to assemble, the time is not far distant when those who are entrusted with the diocesan government of the Church, will not know to which hand to turn for counsel and direction in the coming emergencies."

To the convictions thus expressed on the occasion of the first step taken by Convocation towards the resumption of its active functions, Bishop Blomfield not only adhered, but gave practical effect, during the remainder of his Episcopate. While the Convocation of the Northern Province was kept in a state of enforced coma by the determined refusal of its Metropolitan to allow a single act to be done, the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury, by a succession of moderate and judicious advances, gradually resuscitated its dormant powers, and made them available for practical purposes; and in all the measures adopted for this purpose Bishop Blomfield took an active, and not unfrequently a leading part. In the Session of Convocation in February, 1852, he presented several petitions,—as did six of his Episcopal Brethren,—praying Convocation to take steps for procuring from the Crown the necessary license for the performance of its constitutional functions; a prayer which was re-echoed by an address from the Lower to the Upper House, and which in the Upper House received the support of a majority of the Bishops present, among whom was Bishop Blomfield, but was overruled by the Archbishop's determination to prorogue.

A dissolution of Parliament having taken place in consequence of the change of Government, a new Convocation was summoned in November of the same year, when Bishop Blomfield was one of the Bishops who objected to the draft of the address to the Queen proposed by the Archbishop, on the ground of its being of a retrograde character, and eventually obtained the insertion of a clause expressive of the conviction that the legislative assemblies of the Church are an essential and most important part of her constitution, and intimating an intention to petition the Crown, though not at that moment, yet at no distant day, for the Royal license to transact such business as could not be transacted without it. On this occasion Bishop Blomfield adduced in support of the view which he advocated, the opinion of the late Archbishop Dr. Howley, as expressed to himself, that "the time must come when some decisive measures must be taken with respect to Convocation." He reiterated the opinion he had formerly expressed, "that the present constitution of Convocation was not an adequate representation of the Church of England, and that the laity would not long remain content to be excluded from a share, direct or indirect, in its deliberations;" for which reason he "trusted that among the first questions submitted would be that of the constitution of Convocation itself." And in reply to a complaint which had been made of the existing agitation in the Church, he expressed his belief that that and many other evil results might, under God's blessing, have been avoided, if the Church had been permitted to resume her synodal functions," adding that he felt grateful to God for the spirit with which, thus far, the deliberations of Convocation had been conducted.

Of the several Committees appointed by Convocation for the consideration of divers questions,—among them that of Clergy Discipline, on which he had, for several years in succession, made fruitless attempts to obtain Parliamen-

tary legislation,—Bishop Blomfield was an active member, generally Chairman and Reporter. The object, however, which he had most at heart, was the reform of the constitution of Convocation, which he felt to be indispensable to its practical usefulness. Accordingly at the meeting of Convocation in February, 1854, he moved for a Committee, to consider and report with a view to an address to the Crown, “whether any, and, if so, what reforms in the constitution of Convocation were expedient to enable them to treat, with the full confidence of the Church, of such matters as Her Majesty might be pleased to submit to its deliberation.” The Committee having been appointed, an important report was in July of the same year presented by the Bishop of London, as its Chairman, the adoption of which pledged the Convocation to the consideration of that part of its constitution which relates to the representation of the parochial clergy, as a preliminary step to the consideration of other modifications in its constitution. This report the Bishop followed up, by proposing, in the session of June 28, 1855, an address to the Queen, which, after some amendments, was agreed to by both Houses, praying for the Royal license to give effect to the changes which it contemplated. And although the result of this address was not answerable to the just expectations of the Church,—the only reply vouchsafed to it being a dry official intimation from Sir George Grey, to the effect that “Her Majesty had not been advised to comply with its prayer,”—yet the document itself remains on record, as an expression of the desire of the Church to adapt her institutions to the exigencies of her position, and to promote to the utmost of her power the great object of her mission, the spiritual welfare of the people. “Committees of Convocation,” the address set forth, “have sat, and after careful consideration have reported to Convocation on various subjects deeply concerning the spiritual welfare of this realm, namely, on the measures needful for

enforcing discipline among the clergy ; the extension of the Church ; the modification of her services ; and the reform of the representation of the clergy in the provincial synod of Canterbury. We are convinced," the address proceeded, "that the full consideration of this subject is of great moment to the well-being of our Church ; but in order that our deliberations on these and any matters which your Majesty shall see fit to submit for our consideration, may be so conducted as to give to the Church the fullest satisfaction that in such deliberations the mind of the Clergy will be fairly expressed, we humbly submit to your Majesty that it seems desirable to modify the representation of the Clergy in the Lower House of Convocation. We venture, therefore, humbly to pray your Majesty to grant us your Royal license to consider and agree upon a canon or constitution to be submitted to your Majesty's consideration, for effecting such modification."

The decisive step taken on the part of the Church by this address to the Crown forms a not inappropriate conclusion to the history of Bishop Blomfield's energetic and eventful career, the proposal of it having been the last important act of his public life. During the autumn of the same year an attack of hemiplegia disabled him for the continued performance of the functions of his office. Premonitory symptoms of the malady which eventually deprived the Church of his eminent services, had shown themselves as early as the autumn of 1847, during a visit to the Queen at Osborne House ; when, his foot having slipped on one of the polished floors, he fell, and received a blow on the temple, which was followed by an affection of the sight, and by slight paralytic indications in the face and head. The traces which this attack left, never wholly disappeared ; the Bishop's undiminished application to his duties, and the pain and anxiety which the troubles and

divisions in the Church caused him, continued to add to the latent mischief that was lurking in his constitution. Within a few weeks after the memorable session of Convocation, in which the address to the Crown for license to reform its constitution was adopted, the Bishop's sight was so much affected that he went to consult a celebrated oculist in Germany. By his skilful treatment the Bishop was so much benefited, that he was enabled not only to make a tour up the Rhine, and into Switzerland, but during the progress of his journey to preach and to hold Confirmations among the English congregations at the places he visited. This partial alleviation of the malady which had taken possession of his system, was not however of long duration. Shortly after his return to England the Bishop, having again subjected himself to more than ordinary fatigue, was, on the 22nd of October, seized with paralysis, which deprived him of the use of his left side; and although in the course of the winter the beneficial effect produced by removal to more bracing air gave rise at one time to hopes of his being sufficiently restored to enable him to resume his Episcopal functions, it soon became evident that these hopes were doomed to be disappointed. The current and formal business of the Diocese had, shortly after the attack by which he was disabled, been delegated by the Bishop to the two Archdeacons; and for the performance of Episcopal acts several of his Brother Bishops had readily given him their assistance; but these arrangements could not, for any length of time, be sufficient to meet the wants of the Diocese, or satisfactory to the Bishop's own mind. Accordingly he formed the resolution to resign his Diocese; and as the law had made no provision for the maintenance of a Bishop after resignation, an application to Parliament became necessary. The Bishop's own desire was that a general measure might be enacted; but the difficulties and the delays necessarily involved in framing such an enactment, and

the urgency of providing for the Episcopal superintendence of the metropolitan Diocese, prevented the adoption of that course. The form in which the matter was ultimately brought under the consideration of Parliament, became the subject of much animadversion at the time. But however open to just exception the tender of the resignation of a spiritual office on certain pecuniary conditions may be in the abstract, the character of Bishop Blomfield ought not to suffer any prejudice from the transaction which brought his connexion with his Diocese to a close. Doubtless the appointment of a Suffragan would have been, in an ecclesiastical point of view, a preferable mode of dealing with the emergency: but it was hardly to be expected that a man in the condition of health to which Bishop Blomfield was reduced, would or could undertake the arduous task of reviving, in the face of all the difficulties and discussions to which such an attempt would assuredly have given rise, an office which, though recognized by the canon law and by an ancient statute, had been disused for upwards of three centuries. Failing the expedient of a Suffragan, the simple question was, how the Bishop's future maintenance was to be provided for; and if, in the course of the negotiations which ensued, this question assumed too much the form of a bargain, the blame, whatever it may amount to, cannot in common fairness be laid upon the Bishop, who necessarily left it in the hands of his legal advisers. Nor would it be just to cast any severe censure upon them for not feeling at liberty to divest the Bishop of the temporalities of his See without securing a sufficient provision for him. They would scarcely have been justified in acting upon a chivalrous confidence in the justice of the Government of the day, or of the House of Commons, at the risk of exposing one who had served the Church in one of her most eminent stations, in his old age and bodily infirmity, to want or embarrassment. Still less is it to be accounted

as a reproach to Bishop Blomfield, that he had failed so to husband his income as to render such a provision in the event of his retirement unnecessary: on the contrary, the fact that he found himself exposed to the hardship so feelingly described in his first Episcopal charge,—“a failure of the very means of subsistence,” when “growing infirmities at once unfitted him for the effectual discharge of his duty, and required additional comforts and reliefs,” cannot, in the estimation of all right-thinking persons, but reflect additional honour on an Episcopate equalling by its disinterested improvidence the fidelity and prudence with which, as long as health and strength were vouchsafed to him, he devoted himself to its arduous duties.

How deeply the value, as well as the fidelity, of the services so rendered to the Church by Bishop Blomfield was felt by those who had the best opportunities of judging, is attested by the language of the address expressive of “their most affectionate regret,” presented to the Bishop, on his retirement, by the Archdeacons, Rural Deans, and Clergy of the Diocese. “Our minds,” they say, “at such a season naturally revert to the multitude of claims upon our respect and gratitude which you have established by a vigilant, able, conscientious and affectionate administration of the duties of your high office. We have in the first place to recognize our personal obligations for the promptitude, patience, and assiduity with which all our applications for advice and assistance have been met, and the admirable judgment which has guided the counsels given to us. But more especially as regards the interests of that Church of which we have the privilege to be ministers, we have to recognize your bold, ready, and powerful assertion of its rights and claims in Parliament—your numerous sermons, charges, and publications in reply to its opponents, and in vindication of its discipline and doctrines—your personal addresses at public meetings in behalf

of the various objects most deeply affecting the honour of God and the welfare of society—your strenuous and successful labours to the cause of Christian missions—your liberal contributions for the furtherance of the objects earnestly commended by you to others—the assistance freely and munificently rendered in the erection of churches and schools in the metropolis and other parts of the Diocese—the special erection and endowment at your sole charge of the Church of St. Stephen's, Hammersmith—and the leading part which you have always taken in securing the incorporation of religious with secular education in the great public institutions of the country. The remembrance of these and other labours, by which your Lordship has largely contributed both to the general interests of religion, and to our own personal advantage and comfort, cannot but fill us with the deepest sorrow on the contemplation of your retirement from an office the duties of which you have for twenty-eight years so admirably discharged."





CHAPTER XXVI.

Retrospect—Comparison of the State of the Church at the Commencement and at the Close of Bishop Blomfield's Episcopate—Character of the Clergy—Church Patronage—Practical Work of the Ministry—Diligence and Reverence in the Performance of Divine Service—The Sacraments—Confirmation—Parochial Schools—Increased Attention to Doctrine—Church Extension at Home and Abroad—Symptoms of Revival—Difficulties and Dangers—Antagonism of Church Principles to the Tendencies of the Age—The Church and Modern Statesmanship—Hostile Influences in the Legislature—Scottish Presbyterianism—Irish Popery—Altered Relations between the Church and the State—Duty of the Church in her New Position—Temptations to Compromise—Danger of involving Church and State in one common Ruin—Responsibilities of the English Church—The English Church and the World—The English Church and Universal Christendom—The English Church and her Domestic Assailants—Divisions among the Clergy—Apathy and Selfishness of the Laity—Lesson to be learned from Bishop Blomfield's Episcopate—Necessity of Synodal Action—One Spirit and One Body—The Convocation of 1857—Hopes and Prospects.

RIGHTLY and fully to appreciate the practical results of the Episcopate, in retiring from which Bishop Blomfield carried with him into private life the affectionate regard and grateful remembrance of the Clergy over whom he had presided for more than a quarter of a century, it is necessary to look back for a moment to the state of the Church at the outset of his career, as portrayed in the introductory portion of this

history. On comparing the picture drawn of the Church by her Bishops at the former date, with the aspect which she presents at the close of the period, the leading events of which have been traced out in these pages, there is assuredly much cause for thankfulness to her Divine Head, Who, in the person of Bishop Blomfield, raised up an instrument as eminently fitted as he was to meet the peculiar exigencies of so critical a juncture. They were no ordinary times through which it fell to his lot to take a leading part in guiding her as one chief in influence—as he was all but chief in station—among her rulers. The Church at the time when Charles James Blomfield was raised to the position of one of her Chief Pastors, may not inaptly be compared to a vessel which, having long been laid up in ordinary, is unexpectedly towed out, in a crazy, half-rigged and ill-found condition, for active service in a tempestuous sea against a foe armed to the teeth. Here a leak has to be stopped, there a timber to be repaired; stores and ammunition have to be got on board, or sought for among a chaotic mass of materials in the hold; masts and yards, cables and canvass have to be fitted, hauled and hoisted into their places; the compass mounted and the rudder fixed; and all made right and tight, and clear for action; the very crew has to be drilled into seamanship and gunnery,—all in the face of the enemy. Not unlike this was the condition of the Church of England, when Dr. Howley, a prelate of great intelligence and firmness of character, but of slow and hesitating mind, and of a mild not to say timorous temperament, was called to take the helm, and his late chaplain, in the vigour of youth and intellect, eager and quick-sighted, bold and energetic, was stationed by his side, as his intimate counsellor and second in command.

The Churchman who, with an ideal notion of what the Church might be and ought to be, in his mind's eye, scans the present condition of the Church, may see much

to criticise and much to lament; but let him look back upon the change which, within the last thirty years, has been wrought in it; let him consider under what pressure of adverse circumstances that change was wrought; and he will see more reason for encouragement and hope than for despondency and fainthearted despair. Let him compare the present race of Clergy, the men that have entered the ranks of the Church under the system inaugurated by Bishop Blomfield, with the class of men who found their way into her reading-desks, her pulpits, and her livings, in the preceding generation: whether regard be had to well-attested and well-sustained respectability of character, to general attainments and theological scholarship, or to seriousness of purpose and appreciation of the spiritual powers and functions of the ministry, it would be difficult to point out in any profession a more striking contrast, a more decided progress, than that which the clerical profession exhibits when viewed at the two periods in question. Let him note in the next place the improvement which has taken place in the distribution of ecclesiastical patronage, especially of that which is in the hands of the Bishops. Though occasional instances of nepotism may still occur; though merit may still, as a general rule, require the aid of birth and connection to secure for it its just reward and an appropriate sphere of action, and, in the absence of those adventitious advantages, may often be left to pine in obscurity and poverty: yet it is undeniable that a large portion of the Episcopal patronage is appropriated—thanks to the noble example set, in this particular too, by Bishop Blomfield—to the encouragement of deserving clergymen in the respective dioceses; that much of the other ecclesiastical patronage, and no small proportion of the lay patronage, is distributed with a proper regard for the qualifications of the nominees;—the patronage of the Crown, exercised under the influence of political partizanship, and of the exigencies of the lobby

of the House of Commons, being the only description of patronage still liable to be unscrupulously administered, without reference to the great end of the Christian ministry, and for purposes foreign to the character and well-being of the Church;—above all, that even in the most flagrant instances of corrupt exercise of Church patronage some regard to public decency is deemed necessary, and men such as were in former days thrust into benefices and dignities, would under no circumstances, and upon no account, pass muster in the present day.

If, from the preliminaries of ordination and appointment, we turn to the practical work of the Ministry; if we follow the new race of clergy into their cures, we find, in most of the dioceses, and with rare exceptions, the clergy resident on their benefices; in large cures for the most part assisted by carefully selected and efficient curates,—the race of unlicensed and unlicensable clergy hired by the job being all but wholly extinct: we find them, though often remunerated by a disgracefully scanty pittance, and dependent either on private means, or on scholastic and literary exertions for their subsistence, laying themselves out, to the utmost of their power, and beyond their power, for the spiritual welfare of their flocks; diligent in private as well as public ministrations; and, apart from the express functions of their sacred office, in various and indirect ways labouring for the improvement of the social, the moral and religious condition of the people committed to their charge; thus realising the expressive figure of the leaven hid in three measures of meal, till the whole is leavened. If we observe their public ministrations, we find, instead of the niggardly allowance of a solitary service once in seven days, as a rule with but rare exceptions, two, and in populous places three, services on the Lord's Day; and, in addition to these, in most churches, services on the Saints' and other Holy Days, as well as other week-day

services, in Lent, in Advent, and in the Ember weeks, or all the year round; and, where there is a sufficient population to warrant it, not unfrequently a daily service. Those services we see performed for the most part with a propriety and reverence becoming the occasion; and—however short the Church may fall of the proper standard of ritual uniformity—yet generally with much more regard for the directions of the Prayer Book, with much more exactness and decency of observance—if not of the Rubrics, at least of the customs of each particular church—than in bygone days.

Still more marked is the improvement which has taken place in the administration of the Sacraments. The font has almost everywhere displaced the unseemly bason; its position and condition being such as tend to reverence and edification in the ministration of the Sacrament of Baptism, restored, as well as the Churching service, to its proper place in the public service of the Congregation, in a daily increasing number of churches; and reclaimed from the slovenly and perfunctory character to which it had very generally sunk down, to that of a solemn and impressive ceremonial, as the outward sign and seal of an inward and spiritual grace. The administration of the Holy Eucharist has become almost universally more frequent; three times a year, which had well nigh become the rule, and greater frequency the exception, has become the exceptional measure of eucharistic privilege offered to the people; the rule being, once in every month, and on the principal festivals; while for large congregations the opportunities of communicating are still further multiplied, not only by the appointment of a greater number of Communion days, but by early Communion, to suit the convenience of all classes of worshippers. In the performance of the Communion Service—besides a greater reverence, generally, and especially as regards the disposal of the elements both before and after consecra-

tion,—the more impressive as well as more rubrical practice of individual administration has, to a very great extent, been resumed. All these advances upon the careless customs of former days, together with more frequent explanations of the nature of the Sacrament, of its obligatory character, and of the blessings attendant on a worthy participation of it, have almost everywhere had the effect of greatly increasing the number of communicants.

In producing this result, it must not be forgotten, that a more careful system of preparation for the rite of Confirmation has had no small share. The pains taken by the parochial Clergy in the instruction of the candidates, as well as the more frequent administration of the rite itself by the Bishops,—of which, likewise, Bishop Blomfield set the example, by adopting the practice of annual, instead of biennial or triennial Confirmations, and, latterly, holding Confirmations in London on Sundays, especially for the convenience of those who are unable to attend on week-days,—have had the effect of inducing among the laity generally, and especially those of the rising generation, a much more wide-spread knowledge of, and attachment to, Church principles; and thus largely extending at once the blessings and the influence of the Church. And this more intelligent and more formal introduction to the full privileges of Church-membership, has itself been greatly facilitated by the wide extension given to an improved system of parochial schools. Whereas formerly there were comparatively few parishes which had regular day schools for the children of the lower classes; and where such schools did exist, the education imparted in them was of the most limited character, and of a most inferior kind, parochial schools have come to be considered as an indispensable adjunct to the Church, and an integral part of the parochial system; and not only are the teachers of those schools persons of a superior class,

expressly educated for their calling, but the scholars have generally the benefit of catechetical and Scriptural instruction from the Clergyman himself, who is, in practice, almost invariably the prime mover and superintendent of popular education in his parish.

With regard to doctrine, though it is undeniably true that various and startling attempts have been made to tamper with the sense of the formularies and articles of the Church, and to evacuate the obligations imposed upon the clergy by their subscription to them, yet it would be rash to conclude from thence that there has been retrogression even in this particular. The very endeavours to shake off or to explain away the obligations involved in subscription, are rather to be regarded as an evidence that those obligations have come to be more stringently interpreted and more deeply felt. And in like manner the violence and party bitterness with which certain doctrines of the Church,—more particularly those which relate to the Apostolic commission and the spiritual power of the ministry, and to the effectual grace of the sacraments,—are denounced, so far from indicating that these doctrines are losing ground in the teaching of the Church, afford in reality most satisfactory proof, though of a painful and undesirable character, of the greater power which has been given to those doctrines, and of the greater power with which they have been put forth, whereby silent indifference and doubt have been aroused into positive denial and strong opposition. To compare with the state of ecclesiastical opinion the controversies on these and other biblical topics, the state of torpor in which the mind of the Church was one time enveloped, and in which the great principles, to whom what was afterwards called the Reformation took its rise, found it so difficult to make any progress whatever, we may reasonably doubt about the improvement, however deplorable some of the efforts may be.

not on the whole a healthful symptom of restored life, and as such, a cause of congratulation rather than of regret. Few probably will hesitate to concur in the sentiment uttered by Bishop Blomfield, in his Visitation Charge of 1850, when, in reference to the Gorham controversy, he observed that "we may see some reason to be thankful that *any* question of a purely religious nature should have excited so wide and deep a feeling in the nation at large. I cannot," the Bishop continued, "but regard it as an indication of the growth of religious knowledge and principle in the people of this Christian country, when I see them taking so lively an interest in an inquiry respecting an article of faith."

Again, if to all these considerations we add the fact that the Church has undeniably enlarged her borders both at home and abroad,—that the work of Church extension has been constantly progressing, new churches being built and consecrated, and additional Clergy employed in connexion with these new churches, in every direction,—that in the various missionary fields of the Church of England the Church has been planted in her full integrity, and that the fruits of this return to the Apostolical method of propagating the Church and her faith are already apparent in the multiplication of our foreign and colonial churches, and the spread of the Gospel among heathen and unbelievers,—it is difficult to understand how any impartial observer of the history of the Church during the last thirty years can arrive at any other conclusion than this— that the Church has made immense progress in the hearts of men, and that her internal condition, at all events, exhibits, in almost every point, a decided improvement.

But while we are fully justified in pointing to all these symptoms of revival, as furnishing a more than sufficient answer to those who would bid us despair of the Church

of England, and as affording abundant encouragement to those who are in their various stations labouring for her welfare, to persevere in their exertions on her behalf and in her service, the very fact that he who has taken so leading and conspicuous a part in the achievements over which we rejoice with thankfulness, has fallen a self-immolated victim to his zeal and activity in the Church's cause, warns us that whatever advances the Church has made, have not been made without a struggle of great severity, not without such drawbacks upon our confidence in the future of the Church as may well lead us — not to refrain from rejoicing — but to rejoice with trembling. Nor must the affectionate reverence with which the name of Bishop Blomfield will never cease to be regarded while there is a Church of England, and the sense of the deep debt of gratitude which the Church owes to him for his unreserved and disinterested devotion of himself to her interests and to the maintenance of her principles, be permitted to stand in the way of our deducing from the errors and failures from which his eminently useful and in the main successful career was not exempt, such instruction as may be turned to account for the guidance of the affairs of the Church in the struggles and conflicts which too evidently lie before her.

The principal cause from which such struggles and conflicts are to be apprehended, is the alienation which has, undeniably, grown up between the Church and the State. In some degree this is doubtless owing to the antagonism between the principles of which the Church is the exponent, and the tendencies of the age, which are essentially utilitarian and materialistic. In proportion as the Church has, by the internal development of her life, risen above the character of a mere State establishment, presenting in her temporalities a wide field for the convenient exercise of patronage, and constituting by the influence of her teaching and supervision a species of preventive force, a spiritual

police,—in proportion as she has realised her high mission as a branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, called to impart to this nation and kingdom the blessings of the Gospel, and to make them in return instrumental for the kingdom and glory of Christ,—in the same proportion has she of necessity become obnoxious in the eyes of men whose political theories recognize no other end of government or legislation, than the increase of national wealth, the *summum bonum* of the policy termed "liberal," and the unfailing source, as is vainly imagined, of national prosperity and individual happiness. Viewed in the light of those theories, the claim of the Church to a share of the national wealth, to be appropriated to the great ends of the Church, the glory of Christ and the spiritual and eternal welfare of mankind, is nothing more than a sectarian pretension to lay the nation under tribute for the propagation of certain peculiar tenets: a pretension which it is thought the more incumbent on the State to discountenance and to resist, because it is associated with the supposed neglect on the part of the Church of that which, according to the ideas of modern statesmanship, is her proper province and specific duty,—to make herself generally useful as a moral and religious agent, and in so doing to shape her arrangements and her teaching so as to bring them into accordance with the opinions of men in power, and with the popular humour of the times.

If the growing alienation between the Church and the State were owing to this cause alone, though sufficiently serious to justify grave apprehensions, it would admit of a prospect of mitigation by the influence of faithful teaching on the part of the Church, arousing the national mind to a sense of the vanity and perishableness of those low and utilitarian objects to the pursuit of which it has surrendered itself with such intensity of devotion; of the fallacious nature of the hopes of national prosperity and

individual happiness, built upon those objects ; and of the corrupting and debasing effect which the pursuit of them cannot fail to produce upon the national character. But unhappily the cause of alienation lies not between the Church of England and the State of England as representing the people of England alone. The legislative changes introduced at the beginning of the period over which the history of the Church recorded in these pages extends, have had the effect of giving a powerful influence, and a virtual preponderance, to elements of a character more deeply and permanently hostile towards the Church, than any temporary declension of the national mind from the higher principles and aims of religion to maxims and objects of a lower kind. The English element in the House of Commons—unfortunately for the weal of the Empire become the centre of all political life—is neutralized by the Scottish and the Irish elements ; the former essentially democratic in religion no less than in politics ; the latter to a very large extent representing not the Irish subjects of the British Crown, but the interests and pretensions of the triple Crown of the Roman Pontiff. On those two elements no faithfulness of teaching, of exhortation, of reproof, on the part of the Church of England, can produce any impression ; they deny her mission, and repudiate whatever proceeds from her with undisguised and insolent hostility ; nor can anything short of the conversion of the Presbyterian population of Scotland to the Episcopal Church, and of the Popish population of Ireland to the Irish Branch of the United Anglo-Irish Church, ever bring back that unity of religious and political action which was once the characteristic feature of the Government of England, and the foundation of England's power and greatness.

In the absence of any prospect,—except this exceedingly remote contingency,—of the Government and Legis-

lature ever again becoming amenable to those principles of eternal truth, of which she is the exponent, the Church of England has no option but to accommodate herself to the new position which the altered character of the State has created for her. The conclusion obviously deducible from this state of things is fully borne out by the experience of Bishop Blomfield's repeated but fruitless attempts to obtain from the Government and the Legislature, either the necessary funds for extending the operations of the Church at home and abroad, on a scale commensurate with the wants of the population, or the enactment of measures for regulating the internal discipline of the Church, and thereby increasing her general efficiency. Bishop Blomfield, the earlier part of whose career coincided with the period of transition through which the relations between the Church and the State have reached their present aspect, may indeed stand excused before the tribunal of history, if he continued to rely on the ancient relations between Church and State for some time after they had changed their character, and to cherish the hope that by making a partial surrender of her rights and possessions, and by endeavouring to commend herself to the minds of utilitarian statesmen by her usefulness as an instrument for the maintenance of social order and peace, the Church might so far conciliate the State as to induce a hearty co-operation between them for the common good. But after the experience of his failure, those to whom the interests of the Church are committed, would be without excuse, if they should continue to look to the action of the Government and the Legislature for measures which shall increase her efficiency. All that the Church can reasonably hope for—and this she has a right to expect—is that her territorial occupation of the country, and her temporalities, shall be respected and protected by the State, and that the State will, on the principle of equal religious freedom

to all, give its sanction to such measures as she herself may from time to time devise for the promotion of her own welfare, and of that of the nation at large, which,—whether acknowledged to be so or not,—is intimately and indissolubly bound up with the welfare of the Church.

The last-named consideration renders it a matter of anxious duty on the part of the Church to acquiesce in her new position, and to proceed to take the measures of internal improvement and development which that position requires, in the manner least calculated to give offence, or to widen the existing breach by unnecessary provocations; in order that, if possible, what still remains of the ancient relations between the Church and the State may be preserved; that, if a rupture should unfortunately be forced on by her enemies, none of the guilt of an event so calamitous to this nation and empire may lie at the Church's door; and that, if it should please the Divine Head of the Church to visit the contempt thrown upon His Ordinance,—from which His three sore judgments, the famine, the pestilence, and the sword, successively sent upon it, have hitherto proved ineffectual to recall this State and nation,—by further inflictions of His avenging and correcting hand, the Church may not be involved in the demonstrations of His righteous wrath, but may be ready to His hand as an instrument of healing in mercy the wounds caused by the stroke of His displeasure. At the same time, having regard to the higher duty which the Church owes to her Divine Lord and Head, and to her own character as His Body, it behoves the Church carefully to guard against allowing herself to be betrayed, by a desire for peace and a fear of giving offence, into any compromise of the principles upon which she is based, and which are committed to her guardianship. If the Church should be tempted,—and indications are not wanting that she is about to be subjected to that

temptation,—by the bribe of State support to relinquish those principles, to abdicate her character as a Branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, and to accept in the place of it that of a religious State Establishment, modelled on the political theories and religious opinions of the nineteenth century, she would commit at once an act of treason and a fatal mistake, involving the tempter and the tempted alike in one terrible and irretrievable ruin.

From these considerations it is apparent that, even when viewed only in reference to her own destinies and those of the British Empire, the task which at this time devolves upon the Church of England is one of deep responsibility, as well as of extreme delicacy. But when in addition to this it is considered how vast is the extent of that Empire, and how powerful the influence which it exercises, and from which no one quarter of the globe, no one branch of the human family, no one portion of Christendom, is altogether exempt, the sense of that responsibility is infinitely deepened, and becomes almost appalling to contemplate. The insular seclusion in which the Church of England had long been content to shut herself up, has, during the course of Bishop Blomfield's Episcopate, and in no small degree by the effect of measures in which he took the initiative, been exchanged for a cosmopolitan position. She is the acknowledged head of numerous Reformed Episcopal Churches throughout the world; many of them directly of her planting; all of them looking to her as the channel through which their Bishops have derived their Apostolic Commission; and nearly all of them having received from her the deposit of the Catholic faith. Without any express enactment or agreement, her Primate is regarded by these Churches as holding among their Bishops the same rank of precedence which the Patriarchs have long exercised within

the limits of their several Patriarchates. So placed, the Church of England has to sustain her position and character in the face of the orthodox Churches of the East, which have recently been awakened to a sense of their low and degraded condition, and have become more or less accessible to the purer Gospel light brought within their reach from Churches in the West, of whose existence they were scarcely cognizant; in the face of the Reformed Communion of the Continent of Europe, which are struggling to recover themselves from a state of lamentable ecclesiastical anarchy and doctrinal confusion consequent upon the extinction among them of the Apostolic ministry at the period of their separation from Rome; in the face, lastly, of the Papal Church, whose hierarchical hosts are encamped, by an insolent act of schismatical intrusion, on her own territories, with the avowed purpose of internecine war and conquest, ready to take advantage of any error or lapse by which she might seem to forfeit her ancient and catholic position.

While thus called upon to maintain that position in the face of the whole Christian world, the Church of England has to hold her own against numerous domestic assailants, representing countless forms of heresy and schism, and against a utilitarian and latitudinarian State, whose alliance with her she is in conscience bound to the utmost of her power to maintain, although its rulers and legislators variously defraud her of the exercise of her just and constitutional rights and privileges, and make it their chief care to give a ready hearing to all her detractors, and free scope to all her enemies. And amidst all these heavy claims made from without upon her forbearance, her energy and her wisdom, she has to contend with difficulties of no ordinary character from within. Two extreme schools among her clergy, of which even some of her Bishops are avowed or reputed partizans, distract her by the sound of doctrinal controversies, and by the

still more offensive and acrimonious din of ritual disputes. Her laity, drawn hither and thither by these two schools, have, under the influence of such contentious teaching, unlearned the weightier matters of the Gospel, and are, except in solitary and all the more praiseworthy instances of devotion and munificence, deaf to the claim which the Church has upon their personal co-operation with the clergy, and their consecration of a portion of their substance, for carrying on the great work committed to her by her Divine Head: so much so that not only the services of the great majority of her Clergy are accepted, nay often imperiously exacted, without the slightest reference to the Divine command, that "they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel," but the most self-sacrificing devotion on the part of the Clergy does not avail even to obtain from the laity that amount of help in their work which is necessary to enable them to afford opportunities of worship, and to extend the ministration of the means of grace, to the masses of the population.

Of all those demands which her position makes upon the Church of England, of all those difficulties by which she is hindered in coming up to the full measure of her mission and her duties, the history of Bishop Blomfield's Episcopate is one continuous illustration: and the question, therefore, arises, Can we gather from it any suggestion as to the means whereby the Church may, by the Divine help, be rendered "sufficient for these things?" The answer to that question, while it runs, with more or less distinctness, through the whole history, is summed up, as it were, in the transactions which mark the close of his career.

Is not the great and fundamental lesson which that history seems to teach in many ways, the simple, the elementary lesson, that for doing God's work effectually the Church must look, not to any contrivance of human

policy; not to any party combination or association of individuals; not to any human talent, cleverness, wisdom, or energy, however eminent, however self-devoted; but solely to the wisdom and the strength of God, of which, if she will only realise the fact of her oneness in Christ, she has the faithful and unfailing promise? To concentrate the scattered energies which are in various ways labouring, professedly and in intention for the common purpose, but practically in mutual obstruction; to harmonise the divergent and often antagonistic tendencies of mind which, each intent upon its own distinctive peculiarities, are severally pursuing their headlong courses in mutual repulsion, is a problem which can be solved—which by the Divine Head of the Church is intended to be solved—only in one way, the way ordained by Himself through His Apostles—the synodal assembly of the Church, all submitting themselves in one common act of humility to the correction and guidance of that One Spirit by Whom alone the character of oneness can be given to the Body; Who is “the Author not of confusion but of peace, in all the Churches of the Saints.” This was the conclusion at which, towards the close of his career, Bishop Blomfield himself arrived. He had entered upon his work, animated by an earnest and far from unenlightened zeal for the promotion of the glory of Christ in His Church: to this purpose he consecrated himself in a spirit of self-forgetting, self-sacrificing devotion not often surpassed in the best ages of the Church; to it he brought, in addition to his zeal and devotion, rare talents, distinguished attainments, singular opportunities, and an increasing weight of personal influence, the joint result of his high character, his bold and nervous eloquence, his noble example, and his eminent station; in pursuing it he displayed a spirit of forbearance and of conciliation not often united with views so lucid and principles so well-defined as those by which he was guided; in the midst of a Church

divided by party, he proved himself not a partizan but a Churchman,—a Bishop, not of one section or another, but of the Church; with unbending firmness of adherence to principle and to the call of duty, he combined a readiness to make concessions to the utmost limit which conscience would allow, and in self-denying regard of his own character for consistency: yet this same man, at the close of incessant endeavours, extending over more than a quarter of a century, for promoting the unity and efficiency of the Church,—and that assuredly not without abundant prayer for the Divine guidance, nor as far as it could be vouchsafed to the efforts of an individual, without manifest tokens of the Divine blessing—confessed his sense of utter helplessness, and pointed to the Synod of the Church,—duly composed under the control of the Episcopate of clergy and of faithful laity, and acting in faith, the faith of love and obedience, in the covenanted presence and under the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit invoked upon their deliberations,—as the hope of the Church amidst the perils of the times, for the sake, of which he himself is bearing the burden of the body.

Shall this lesson, so impressively set forth in Blomfield's history, by his word, by his example, be lost upon the Church? In bringing to a close the struggle which he so long and so bravely sustained to a close, it is no small consolation to the writer of these pages, as assuredly it must be to the Bishop himself, that the new Convocation of the Province of Canterbury, assembled at this moment, has inaugurated its meeting by placing on record, in the eloquent appeal of the Bishop of Oxford,—the able coadjutor of Bishop Blomfield in the days of his strength and activity,—a distinct assertion of its constitutional right of deliberation; and by initiating a movement which has for its object to give the fullest effect both at home and abroad to the great object

of her mission, that of conveying to all men the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as the ruling principle of life,—in practical illustration of the truth of the sentiment uttered by Bishop Blomfield at the very outset of his career as a minister of Christ: “ It is not yet too late for us to put fresh incense on our censers, and to stand between the dead and the living.”



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